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The Nation

February 9, 1985 $1.25; U.K. 65p

TORIAL

OFFICIAL VIGILANTES

The case of Bernhard Goetz has become a kind of diagnostic test for sensitivity to issues of public justice, police authority and race relations. While many New Yorkers have reacted with riotous and racist fantasies of revenge, the press and political leaders have sought to set forth more palatable solutions to the problem of crime. There's an idea floating around for a National Police Corps that would bring middle-class students into the business of social control at the curbside level. It seems a fitting monument to the official vigilantism of the Reagan era.

A *New York Times* editorial on January 27 announced that "110 percent of the American public" supported the subway vigilante and concluded, "Government has failed . . . in its most basic responsibility: public safety."

If the editorial writer had looked elsewhere in his paper that day, he would have seen that the failure of governmental authority is not confined to police protection of straphangers and pedestrians from muggers and punks. A meticulous investigation of New York City's Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Elliot M. Gross, by reporter Philip Shenon concluded that Gross had consistently covered up police abuses and had fudged autopsies of victims of police brutality.

Surely the official callousness described by Shenon in sickening detail is not limited to the New York City coroner's office. In urban areas and rural counties, government routinely fails to extend its protection to those who need it most—the victims of its own abusive policing, the castoffs of its inadequate welfare systems, the refuse of its bureaucratic arrogance. That victimized public is responding with another kind of vigilantism. It's usually called crime, but there is another way of putting it: those treated unequally by the law wrongly but inevitably take the law into their own hands.

OPEN LETTER TO LES ASPIN
Norman Birnbaum

HOW MUCHA DOSA CONTRA COSTA?
Alexander Cockburn

PICKING IN NICARAGUA
Zachary Sklar

KHOMEINI'S REVOLUTION
Dilip Hiro

GEOFFREY HILL'S PÉGUY
Mark Rudman

DAVID LEAN'S BOMBAY DUCK
Andrew Kopkind

REAGAN & HUMAN RIGHTS

HOW TO MAKE DICTATORS LOOK GOOD

PATT DERIAN

For all its imperfections, the Carter Administration pursued human rights policies that gave hope to people living under vicious rulers. Juntas and military and civilian dictators feared that the United States might implement President Carter's human rights doctrine and refuse to do business with them. Under Ronald Reagan, all that is changed. Someone in the Administration may say something unpleasant about human rights conditions in a given country, but no despot trembles. Soon another official will say or do something to comfort the offended government.

My harsh view of this Administration's record stems from my experience as Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights under Jimmy Carter. This country can make a difference if it makes even modest attempts to improve human rights practices and conditions. In spite of the Reagan enmity to the concept, concern for such matters is not limited to Democrats; my bias is pro-human-rights, not anti-Republican. It is political in the sense that I believe U.S. foreign policy interests have been severely damaged by the record of the last four years, as have the people who have suffered deprivation of their rights at the hands of their governments.

A comprehensive and succinct review of Reagan's record can be found in two reports prepared by Americas Watch, Helsinki Watch and the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights: "Failure," which came out in January 1984, and "In the Face of Cruelty," issued last month. Coolly, the bungled performance is revealed country by country, and the flouting of law and treaty obligations is recorded.

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LETTERS.

'A KIND OF EXCELLENT DUMB DISCOURSE'

Boulder, Colo.

Prof. Leonard Kriegel struggles unsuccessfully to have his academic cake and eat it too ["Who Cares About the Humanities?" Dec. 29–Jan. 5]. After labeling those on the New Left "drones who called themselves Structuralists," he criticizes William Bennett for working in an Administration where "image and substance have absolutely no relationship to each other." One can appreciate Kriegel's clever turns of phrase, but one wonders what meaningful effect his soliloquy can have on higher education.

While one can find agreement with Kriegel's statement about the Reagan Administration's reliance on image over substance, *To Reclaim a Legacy* and the implications behind it are fact, not image. One need only travel to an American college to discover the ferment—and confusion—surrounding the revision of the curriculum and general education.

One wonders about the "centrality" of a humanistic education that Bennett and Kriegel associate primarily with "Western thought and Western civilization." Surely the curriculum of a Reaganaut such as Bennett and that of the director of City College of New York's Center for Worker Education (Kriegel) would differ drastically. Remember that general education came under attack in the late 1960s primarily for its lack of relevance to constituencies new to academia—blacks and women, for example—and for curricular irrelevancy to the times. If we are to rely on Bennett's opinions about the need for Western thought and Western civilization, is it not possible that we will find ourselves again with a plan of study that looks at education, culture and the world from a decidedly ethnocentric viewpoint? Is it not conceivable that the left can articulate a curriculum based on a liberating education that nevertheless works from Bennett's call for curricular revision? The time for belittling one's colleagues and bemoaning one's enemies is over; higher education needs constructive criticism not only from right-wing critics like Bennett but also from left-wing critics like Kriegel. *William G. Tierney*

'THE RED PLAGUE RID YOU, FOR LEARNING ME YOUR LANGUAGE!'

Newmarket, N.H.

Leonard Kriegel's essay about the humanities is the most reactionary piece I've seen in *The Nation*. Kriegel would make a good apologist for the Christian far right: he seems to believe, as they do, that students should be forced to read one particular kind of material ("classic" white male authors). The purpose of liberal education should be to open minds, not to constrict them through rigid adherence to a reading list of "correct" books. Certainly it would be nice if every undergraduate read Shakespeare, but it might do an undergraduate even more good to read Virginia Woolf, Alice Walker or Amiri Baraka. What we need is a discussion of ways to make our students read, write and think more, not a program to restrict their reading lists, their thinking and their minds. *Brock Dethier*

'THOUGH THIS BE MADNESS, YET THERE IS METHOD IN 'T'

Canby, Ore.

Leonard Kriegel's claim that "to some extent the seeming irrelevance of the humanities to American society is a consequence of the left's inability to make distinctions" leads nicely into the conservative and elitist complaints that make up the body of his essay.

For Kriegel, the left's abuse of its enormous power is one reason for working people's great ignorance of the best of human experience. He moans that the left no longer wants "to make cultural life widely available." The lament indicates that he views culture to be created, maintained and distributed by those in power: a cultural trickle-down theory.

If the left has found that the working classes participate in cultural practices and institutions that oppose the ideological interests of the powerful, it has made a strategic discovery, hasn't it? Such a discovery can lead to inquiry about both the content and concept of a canon of "classics," whose inventors have been sponsored in their fantasies by the powerful. Kriegel appears to believe that pursuit of such inquiry means that the left "is content to deny that there is anything worth reading or thinking about."

He seems to consider the only creative act to be the defense of the status quo. "By denying the worth of the tradition that helped mold our lives, we [the left] allowed ourselves to be pushed to where we viewed creativity itself as questionable." Perhaps he is speaking for himself; certainly he is not speaking for the left, for while he was "denying," others were honestly questioning. They were asking questions like, What is the worth of these other, more local and modest, traditions from which the powerful have tried to separate the working classes?

Things haven't changed much. While many leftists continue to ask central, creative questions like, Who is served by a belief in "the tradition"? Kriegel mainly denies, by essayistic deed if not by word, the value of questioning. He only assumes a connection between the practices and values of the left and the apparently sorry condition of the humanities, and this assumption contributes strongly to an uninstructive essay. *Shawn Parkhurst*

KRIEGEL REPLIES 'WHAT FOOLS THESE MORTALS BE!'

New York City

Art, wrote the great Marxist critic Ernst Fischer, represents the "triumph of reality over ideology." Had he read the letters of Shawn Parkhurst and Brock Dethier, he would have confronted ideologues whose passion blinds them to what they are reading. Parkhurst's letter embodies that peculiar patois—"ideological interests of the powerful," "conservative and elitist complaints," etc.—that makes much of what passes for radical thought in this country such depressing examples of what Trotsky called "the plot mentality of history." Dethier is no slouch with a cliché either. He apparently believes that the Christian far right is elitist, and he is going, God help us, "to open minds, not to constrict them through rigid adherence to a reading list of 'correct' books." If that is his idea of what the purpose of a literary or cultural canon is, he needs more than the ministrations of Woolf and Baraka.

William G. Tierney's letter, on the other hand, asks some intelligent questions. I am not certain that Bennett or I or any humanist can answer them. But let me, at least, face what seems to have upset him most deeply—that the idea of culture Bennett propounds and I accept is primarily Western. And let me do it knowing that Parkhurst and Dethier are going to label me an elitist.

To love and to teach the record of Western civilization, as I do, is not to deny the validity or the worth or the vitality of other traditions and other cultures. It is, however, to address openly that cumulative cultural record that Fischer speaks of as "the wager for Faust's soul." The terms of that wager are best taught through the humanities, for the humanities both question and exalt that record. In literature, in art, in philosophy, in music, the struggle to create man is depicted. That the record we teach is primarily Western does not invalidate it. From my perspective, the attack on the humanities in the late 1960s as "irrelevant" to the needs of new academic constituencies was terribly shortsighted, intellectually dishonest and ultimately harmful to those very new constituencies. I said so then, in these pages and elsewhere; I still say so. At the same time, Tierney is correct in finding cultural ethnocentrism undesirable. It is undesirable because, in our world, it is dishonest.

"Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate," demands Shakespeare's Othello. There were Third Worlders even before there was a Third World. Those of us who still claim to stand on the left might take Othello's advice to heart. Otherwise, we are going to leave the stage as he does—with both our blood and our rhetoric flowing. *Leonard Kriegel*

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EDITORIALS.

Sharon Defamed?

In libel actions brought for political reasons, narrow points of law can obscure the vast issues of politics, as a hand held close to the eye will blot out the sun. The case of *Ariel Sharon v. Time Inc.* evoked crucial questions it could not resolve about the conceits of newsmagazine journalism and the deceits of Israeli policy in Lebanon. About the former, the six-member jury was angry enough to compose a statement highly critical of *Time*'s system of reportage, which lends itself to fanciful narrative, ideological innuendo and intellectual irresponsibility. Nobody asked for a second opinion, but the jury provided one—a paraphrase of Henny Youngman's memorable line "You're ugly!"

It might have been just as candid about the conduct of Israel, its politicians and its military commander in the invasion and occupation of Lebanon. Others, however, have been more forthcoming, and some of the sharpest criticisms have been heard in Israel itself, where Sharon has also filed suit against *Time*, though not against any of the local media. It is instructive to contrast the opinions that have been expressed in Israel on the verdict, as well as on Sharon's conduct of the Lebanon war and on his political role, with the passage in *Time*'s story that provoked the suit. The key

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words in the latter were: "Sharon also reportedly discussed with the Gemayels the need for the Phalangists to take revenge for the assassination of Bashir, but the details of the conversation are not known." If those words are actionable, one must conclude that Sharon's lawsuit has cast a darker shadow on the Bill of Rights than *Time*'s erroneous story did on the general's reputation—which, as the following sampler of quotations shows, is none too good in certain Israeli circles.

You have proven that one sentence in one paragraph pertaining to one incident was a lie, but you have yet to prove that you know the meaning of the word "truth." For the truth and you are diametrically opposed. . . . You are not defending me, my country or my people by trying to discredit the system that keeps Israel democratic and those who have been entrusted with power honest.

—Hirsh Goodman, The Jerusalem Post, *January 25*

[The verdict] cannot be interpreted, under any circumstances whatsoever, as a gain or purification of Minister Sharon himself from his legal and moral responsibility for the massacre in Sabra and Shatila.

—Moshe Negbi, Al Hamishmar, *January 25*

The trial was not about anti-Semitism. Ariel Sharon defended no one but himself. And if *Time* needed to be taken to task, Sharon was not the man to do it. For many Israelis Sharon represents the very antithesis of what their country stands for—democracy, justice and equality.

—Andrew Julien, Spectrum, *January 28*

Since the Defense Minister took over, a heavy screen of lack of credibility has descended upon the defense establishment. . . . We do not know what is correct and what is not correct, what is the truth and what is a lie.

—Avraham Tal, Ha'aretz, *February 10, 1983*

A man who puts a snake into a child's bed and says, "I'm sorry. I told the snake not to bite. I didn't know snakes were so dangerous." This man's a war criminal.

—Amos Elon, on the Sabra and Shatila massacres, quoted in The New York Times, *September 27, 1982*

You have no idea who Sharon is, what he is capable of, and what may happen if he takes over. For many life won't be worth living here.

—Aryeh Naor, Cabinet Secretary in the Likud government, quoted in The New York Times, *May 2, 1984*

It is difficult to understand what right Sharon has to appear in public at all. This man should be placed on trial for extending a limited operation into a general war without Cabinet approval. . . . In contrast to former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, the war's victims do not trouble Sharon's rest; indeed, he is using the war as an instrument to further his personal ambition.

—Editorial, Ha'aretz, *December 11, 1983*

We have now reached our fifth war, the most brutal of our wars, the most wretched, the one most obscured by lies. The superfluous, monstrous war. What shall we call it? Its name is supposed to be "Peace for Galilee" but some sensible woman suggested it should be renamed "Glory for Sharon."

—B. Michael, Ha'aretz, *June 18, 1982*

Arik Sharon is one of the politicians in Israel whom I fear as a danger to the state. Sometimes I tremble at what he might do if he had the chance.

—Then Deputy Prime Minister Simcha Ehrlich, quoted in The Jerusalem Post, *June 9, 1980*

A Letter to Les

Dear Representative Aspin:

Congratulations on your recent election as chair of the House Armed Services Committee, a tribute to your knowledge of military affairs and your legislative skill. You have advanced to a very senior rank in government. In every respect, your committee has not exercised independent control over Pentagon policies or over the foreign policies they are designed to serve. It has, instead, given them a qualified endorsement—the qualification muted, the endorsement loud. Its statesmanship has been confined to parceling out contractual largesse. That isn't the independent role envisioned for Congress by the Founding Fathers. To be sure, working sometimes with, sometimes against recent Administrations, you have used your considerable talents to bargain with the national security apparatus. You have, alas, manifested an increasing discretion about the fact that it is an apparatus.

In recent statements, you have deplored the "symbolic" nature of the debate on the MX missile. You seem to extend that critique to discussions of the President's Strategic Defense Initiative. Clearly, however, you approve of some kinds of symbolic politics. You have not taken issue with those who hailed your election to the committee chair, displacing 80-year-old Melvin Price, as an expression of generational change in the House Democratic leadership. You certainly haven't refuted the statements that you have become a national leader. Your negative view of symbolic discussions comes, I gather, from your conviction that the complexity of nuclear weaponry renders proposals like the freeze "simplistic." No doubt, arms control is complex. That is why scientists like Solly Zuckerman and Jerome Wiesner instruct us in these matters; they employ their gifts to reduce matters to essentials. Your own insistence on the complexity of military issues echoes the familiar complaint of our imperial managers and their apologists in the academy and in the press: If only the public would leave those matters to the elite qualified to deal with them, how much easier the conduct of foreign and military policy would be! Henry Kissinger's plaintive lament that he was not allowed to run the world (with a bit of help from another professional, Andrei Gromyko) unimpeded by

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awkward questions is the supreme expression of that attitude.

In arguing with those who criticized your earlier support of the MX, you distributed copies of an article by *The New Republic*'s Morton Kondracke, praising your professionalism. You might have chosen a more impressive witness. Kondracke is one of those journalists who regularly pronounce yesterday's clichés as if they had invented them today. You also distributed an article by a more serious figure, Leslie Gelb of *The New York Times*. Gelb said of you and your Congressional allies: "On more than a few occasions, they have gotten the tacit support of the Administration, which feared, according to officials, that its choice was either support the Aspin group or lose everything." Some of us find that rather dubious praise. Why not ask what the historians will say of you ten or twenty years hence? Why not ask, indeed, if there will be historians around then to comment? Our memory of Vietnam honors persons like Senator William Fulbright, who opposed the war, rather than the hordes of legislative lemmings who followed Lyndon Johnson and Robert McNamara into the sea.

Consider the time you supported funding the MX so that it could be used as a bargaining chip. The bargaining-chip argument has been a favorite of those who see no alternative to the iron logic of the arms race. I first heard it used by the late Aneurin Bevan of the British Labor Party ("Do not send a British Foreign Secretary naked to the conference table"). A Soviet colleague told me the other day that he has heard it often in debates in the Soviet Union. Your acceptance of the argument was widely regarded as evidence of your eligibility to join polite Washington society. Suppose, however, that social acceptance was a device for concealing historical servitude. Those who adopt the logic of the bargaining-chip argument are like prisoners who desperately seek to advance to the rank of trusty.

Your impressive speech to Congress last April may be read as a kind of letter from prison. You took the view that a large reduction in nuclear weapons was unwise because it would increase pressure on the government to employ them in a crisis. The danger of large reductions in our stocks of nuclear arms does not appear to be imminent, however. Your hypothetical exercise in rationality had the practical effect of suggesting that things being the way they are, they cannot be much different. Yet in other parts of your speech, you showed us how dangerous the present situation is. You declared that antisatellite weapons would be destabilizing, and you argued for severe limits on the Strategic Defense Initiative. Now, one gathers, you are prepared to reconsider your earlier opposition to the development of an antiballistic missile system. That could serve as a preliminary to reaching a compromise with the Administration on the Strategic Defense Initiative.

In that April speech, you made two other noteworthy points. You asked the Administration to define and report on its first-strike capability. Surely, you know that an administration can always find experts to testify that America's preparations to attack are defensive in nature and that the Soviet Union's preparations for defense are evidence of its readiness to attack. In the pseudoscientific world of nuclear war theory, anything goes. You also argued for removing tactical nuclear weapons and mines from Europe because they would endanger our troops. May I point out that hundreds of millions of Europeans living in both NATO and Warsaw Pact nations feel endangered by those weapons? They have, perhaps unwisely, not yet begun to evacuate Europe. Is it possible that your enthusiasm for official discourse is so great that the ordinary language spoken by the rest of us strikes you as the blathering of the uninitiated?

Let us turn to two other statements of your views. In *The New Republic* of October 29, 1983, you published a penetrating account of the Pentagon's fatuity and of the Administration's fraudulent claim that U.S. forces are in a high state of readiness. Readiness for what? In an earlier study, you said that the U.S. arms program threatens the nation's long-term economic growth. You observed, "Defense expenditures are justified by the perception of a military threat to this nation." Suppose the perception is in some measure fabricated? Our military apparatus, the giant corporations that are parasitic on it, and the ideology it generates have taken on a life of their own. Questioning the apparatus seems to be an exercise in sectarian futility or utopian fantasy.

As a younger Congressman, you convincingly deflated the specious claims of an increasing Soviet threat to America. Your new post enables you to make a major contribution to public education. Indeed, that is perhaps the highest part of a legislator's task—not the reconciliation of selfish interests. As a member of the Budget Committee you asked your colleagues to examine the Pentagon budget. Had they done so, the symbiosis between many of your present associates on the Armed Services Committee and the military would have been uncovered. If the idea was a good one before you became chair, it is even better now.

Finally, for all the talk of "threat" and "perception" (a deadening kind of discourse which your friends would like to see you criticize, not engage in), isn't it true that a majority of the American people adamantly opposes conscription—and fears war? Our leaders have made a tacit bargain with the public: a lot of tough talk but no one—aside from a few professional junior officers and poor black, Hispanic and white volunteers—need pay the price. A policy that rests on sustained deceit fools no one abroad and does not serve our national honor. It is the largest (and most flawed) bargaining chip of them all. Perhaps we should negotiate among ourselves for a more dignified and effective policy. We await your initiatives.

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

"Discovery"/The Nation Poetry Contest 1985

The deadline for entries to the eleventh "Discovery"/*The Nation* poetry contest, open to poets who have not yet published a book, is February 15. Manuscripts should be sent to Shelley Mason, The Poetry Center of the 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10128.

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Time Runs Out

Finally exonerated of the charge of libel—I wonder when next a jury will be instructed to report its conclusions in stages—*Time* is having its bones picked clean by self-righteous colleagues in the news business. A *New York Times* editorial accused it of "arrogance," and in the course of denouncing *Time*, two columnists of liberal disposition thought it proper to burnish the reputation of Gen. Ariel Sharon in the matter of the massacres at Sabra and Shatila.

Lars-Erik Nelson of the New York *Daily News* said there was no evidence of Sharon's "direct" responsibility; he was merely a "callous, indifferent bystander—an unwitting accomplice—to a horrendous massacre committed by his chosen allies." *The Times*'s Anthony Lewis said it is not true that Sharon "encouraged the massacre or intended it to happen."

So, one more time: as Israeli forces moved into West Beirut, the official reason given by Begin was that this was being done "in order to protect the Moslems from the vengeance of the Phalangists." Why then did the Israelis usher 150 vengeful Phalangists into the camps of the doubly defenseless Palestinians? Not, obviously, to "clean out" the mythical 2,000 "terrorists." Sharon discussed "cleaning out" the refugee camps with Phalange leaders. The troops under his command supervised the arrival at the camps of the Phalange murderers (perhaps even of some of Maj. Saad Haddad's Israeli-backed force from southern Lebanon, for this has never been resolved); observed them and listened to the gunfire as they went about their bloody business; lightened—O Lord—their darkness, amid a power cut in West Beirut, with 81-millimeter flares fired at thirty-second intervals and further flares dropped from planes; and provided a bulldozer to throw earth over the victims. If I provided enemies of Nelson and Lewis with such assistance and urged them forth to slaughter I doubt I would enjoy the exculpations from direct responsibility now offered Sharon.

True Brits

"Distinguished" is usually put in front of "journalist" only when the person in question is either so addled with drink or so long in the tooth that he has to enter government service, like the wealthy Marvin Stone, who is moving from Mort Zuckerman's payroll at *U.S. News & World Report* to the taxpayers' at the U.S. Information Agency. But for once I can refer in good faith, though with sadness, to a distinguished journalist: James Cameron, who died January 26.

Cameron was a fine British progressive who had several moments of glory, not least his principled resignation from *Picture Post*, the British equivalent of *Life*, during the Korean War. He had sent back a story with photographs showing some battered opponents of Syngman Rhee being led away to execution. Lord Hulton, proprietor of *Picture Post*, did not care for this derogation of a Friend of the West and ordered the story killed. It was, and Cameron resigned forthwith. His reporting from Vietnam for the *Evening Standard* matched the high quality of his work from Korea. He was also one of the founders, along with Bertrand Russell, A.J.P. Taylor and others, of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, in the late 1950s. He'd beaten off determined onslaughts by the Reaper quite a few times in recent years, but finally went down, as we all must.

Aside from general sadness at his passing, I regret—given his contempt for the Honours List—not hearing his commentary on the awards picked up by a couple of his fellow hackers in Washington recently. On January 10, British Ambassador Oliver Wright, acting for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, presented the insignia of Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire to Gen. Drew Middleton, military correspondent of *The New York Times*. This is a promotion for Middleton, who was admitted to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by George VI in 1947. Also receiving the insignia of Commander of the Most Excellent Order on that day was James Reston.

Joining them soon, I dare say, will be Anthony Lewis, another turbid Anglophile, who blubbers like a child every time he sees the Union Jack. At the end of last month this Anglophilia reached a new low, as Lewis devoted an entire column to the utterly banal thoughts of Peter Jenkins, whom he described as "the leading British political columnist." Set against this evident falsehood is the fact that Jenkins is a close friend of Lewis and has passed many a summer on Martha's Vineyard with Lewis, discoursing to him about the Social Democratic Party. Each August morning the pair trudge along South Beach, quoting the speeches of David Owen at each other. According to the local Chamber of Commerce, this sight has become one of the principal attractions of the island, rivaling the bridge at Chappaquiddick in allure.

Lewis, admittedly burdened with the responsibility of being *The Times*'s sole expounder of the Constitution, has been on a rising curve of pomposity lately. He took so long clearing his throat before attacking Morley Safer for a *60 Minutes* whitewash of South Africa that I thought he was announcing a run for the Presidency. When he praised Judge Robert Bork's "extraordinarily thoughtful . . . rich opinion" in Bertell Ollman's libel suit against Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, I was not surprised to learn that in that opinion, Bork made a handsome bow to Lewis. Lewis & Co. said nothing when Ollman's appeal was dismissed, but then Ollman is a pointy-headed Marxist who was Red-baited out of a job, not a thug with the blood of thousands on his hands.

Who's Funding the 'Contras'?

The Reagan Administration is moving into higher gear in its determination to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, and we may consequently expect a tidal wave of leaks about Nicaragua's arms buildup and planned subversion of its neighbors. The pattern was set with the story, planted on the night of Reagan's re-election, about the supposed arrival of MIGs in Nicaragua. Now the Pentagon is about to release to Congress—with much fanfare, no doubt—a twenty-three-page report on the Nicaraguan peril, tentatively titled "The Soviet-Cuban Connection."

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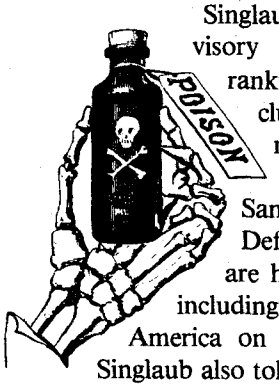
ALEXANDER COCKBURN

This is all part of the barrage to persuade Congress to resume aid to the *contras*. The money keeping them going in the interim is chastely referred to in most of the press as "private funding," although the fencing of aid through such U.S. clients as Honduras, El Salvador and Israel has been noted. The phrase "private funding" has a cozy ring to it, as though it were charity, like a contribution to the Boston Philharmonic, rather than support for 10,000 to 15,000 murderers.

On January 21, Alfonso Chardy of *The Miami Herald* described in detail how some of this funding is organized. A network of millionaires, retired officers and interested émigrés give the *contras* as much as $1 million a month. A central figure in the network is Gen. John Singlaub, retired, head of U.S. forces in Korea until relieved of his command by President Carter for publicly criticizing U.S. policy. He is now president of the World Anti-Communist League, an organization of ultrarightists and outright fascists intimately involved with death squads in Central and Latin America.



Singlaub, who has sat on a Pentagon advisory panel, told Chardy that high-ranking officials at the Pentagon—including such anti-Sandinista point men as Fred Iklé, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and Nestor Sanchez, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Inter-American Affairs—are helping coordinate "relief" efforts, including the shipment of matériel to Central America on U.S. Navy and Air Force craft. Singlaub also told Chardy that he and other former military and intelligence officers collect about $500,000 a month through an organization named U.S. Council for World Freedom.

This is by no means the extent of Singlaub's sinister activities. He is a founder of the Institute for Regional and International Studies in Boulder, Colorado, which has announced it will train *contras* if Congress does not restore aid. Singlaub is, by the way, an ornament at meetings organized by *Soldier of Fortune*, the magazine for literate mercenaries. He belongs to the Louisiana-based Council on National Policy, which also raises money for the *contras*. It is a gold-plated leviathan of the ultraright, including among its members Joseph Coors, the Hunt brothers, Pat Boone, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson of Christian Broadcasting Network and Senators Jesse Helms and John East of North Carolina.

Thus many of the prime funders of Reagan's re-election campaign have, without missing a beat, shifted their resources to the Committee to Install Arturo in Managua. This, of course, is a violation of the Neutrality Act, which forbids private sedition of a government with which the United States has diplomatic relations. And since we might assume they are deducting their donations to the *contras* as charitable contributions, we might conclude that the taxpayers are funding the *contras* after all, the express will of Congress notwithstanding.

Herald of Horrors

This is an appropriate moment to give several cheers to *The Miami Herald*'s coverage of Central and Latin American affairs. Quite aside from Sam Dillon's excellent reporting from El Salvador, *The Herald*, time after time, is well ahead of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and other leading brands. It has also been more critical of the policies of the Reagan Administration.

On December 16, *The Herald* carried a report by Frank Greve and Ellen Warren on a secret U.S. Army helicopter unit that is engaged in Central America and has flown missions inside Nicaragua. The unit is the 160th Task Force of the 101st Airborne Division, operating out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The soldiers in the unit wear civilian clothes, fly at night in CH-47 Chinooks or UH-60 Black Hawks. In 1983 the unit, nicknamed the Night Stalkers, had seventeen fatalities—nearly half the thirty-five reported by the entire Army for that year. *The Herald* suggested that the Army might not be telling the truth about the circumstances of two crashes suffered by the unit. Moreover, it charged that the secret unit's missions may have violated the War Powers Act, as well as the Congressional ban on aid to the *contras*. On December 19, *The Herald* ran a strong editorial discussing the "recurring nightmare" of "tales of illegal American involvement in Central American wars" and called for a full investigation by Congress.

This important story was not picked up by *The New York Times* or, so far as I know, by the networks. And as a measure of the former's editorial stance, we need go no further than its measured support—the same week that *The Herald*'s story and editorial on the secret unit appeared—for the invasion of Grenada (a position horribly endorsed by Tom Wicker). *The Times* announced that the "most compelling reason" for the invasion was the "fear that Grenada had been led into the Soviet and Cuban orbit by Mr. Bishop."

As the Reagan Administration intensifies its denunciations of Nicaragua as a satellite in the Soviet-Cuban orbit, it appears that *The New York Times* will not need much persuading on what needs to be done to protect national security.

A Brave Day

Just as some memorations of James Cameron omitted mention of his great hour in Korea, so too did Herbert Mitgang omit from his obituary a high point in the life of the illustrious *Times* editor Seymour Peck, recently killed in an auto accident on the Henry Hudson Parkway. In January 1956 Peck, at that time working for *The New York Times Magazine*, appeared before the Senate Committee on Internal Security, acknowledged he had been a member of the Communist Party until 1949, before he had joined *The Times*—and refused to name any of his political associates. On the advice of his counsel, Telford Taylor, he did not invoke the First or Fifth Amendments but, more vaguely, cited constitutional guarantees, in a testimony of dignity and courage.

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ARTICLES.

REPORT FROM THE COFFEE FIELDS

Bringing the War Home in Nicaragua

ZACHARY SKLAR

In the early morning the coffee fields of northern Nicaragua are a picture of tranquillity. Dark green trees, three to eight feet high, stretch in endless rows up steep rocky mountains, down ravines, through dense foliage. Clusters of bright red coffee beans hang from the branches, merry as holly in the pale sunlight. All is still and quiet.

The calm is illusory. The coffee fields are a battleground, one of the primary targets of the U.S.-backed *contras* in their three-year terrorist war against the Sandinista government. Coffee, which brought in $150 million in export revenues last year, is Nicaragua's principal source of foreign exchange. A small harvest would have disastrous consequences for the country's economy. It is no coincidence, therefore, that in 1984 the *contras* destroyed eighty state-owned and a dozen private coffee farms in the provinces of Matagalpa and Jinotega, where 75 percent of the crop is grown. They also killed 400 peasant leaders in that region, kidnapped an equal number and threatened many others in an effort to scare *campesinos* away from the fields.

The realities of the war have not been reported in this country. Most American journalists are based in Managua, away from the fighting, and have focused on other issues—opposition leader Arturo Cruz's role in the elections, press censorship, draft resistance, shortages, grumblings about Sandinista inefficiency. What they have failed to convey to American readers is the single most important fact about Nicaragua today: it is engaged in a full-scale war. In 1981 there were fewer than 1,500 *contras*. Now, with the help of $73 million in authorized U.S. aid (and much more in covert and private aid) they have grown into a well-equipped force of 10,000 to 15,000 guerrillas. In the last three years, nearly 8,000 Nicaraguans have died in the war against the *contras*. At least as many more have been wounded or kidnapped or are missing, and an estimated 120,000 have been displaced from their homes. For a tiny country of 3 million, those figures are staggering. If the United States had had the same proportion of its population killed in the Vietnam War, the number of dead would have been about 400,000. And although Congress cut off official funds for the *contras* in June, unofficial funding has increased and Nicaragua's casualties continue to mount—3,000 dead in the last year, more than 300 of whom were children under 12. [See "Beat the Devil," page 134.]

Because the war is being fought mostly in the northern part of the country and consists largely of scattered acts of terrorism by the *contras*, reporters and visitors rarely witness the violence. But in Matagalpa province, where I worked in the coffee harvest last December with sixteen other North Americans, its scars are everywhere. At a party welcoming us to one farm, a *campesino* broke down and wept as he described how the *contras* had killed his brother fifteen days earlier, while he was planting trees in a reforestation program. Such stories are not uncommon. More often, though, the effects of the war are revealed in less dramatic ways. There are severe shortages of many basic items—medicine, water, shoes, toothpaste, toilet paper, school supplies, batteries, gasoline, spare parts. There is wreckage too. Altogether, the *contras* have caused $250 million in damage, destroying health- and day-care centers, schools, farms and other property.

To deal with the urgency of the war, in January 1984 the Sandinistas began conscripting men age 16 through 22, depleting the labor force available for the coffee harvest. In November, following the U.S.-manufactured MIG scare, the government decided that the 20,000 students in Managua who were to have picked the crop would remain in the capital in case of an American invasion. It then issued a call for volunteers, and sixty men and women from seventeen countries in Western Europe, Latin America and North America responded by joining the Maurice Bishop international harvest brigade. Ranging in age from 12 to 74, we were the first of thousands of "*brigadistas*," including 500 more from the United States, who have gone to Nicaragua to pick coffee and cotton this winter. Our brigade, sponsored by UNAG, the national union of farmers and ranchers, worked at two farms, San José and La Lima, located in a relatively secure area of the war zone, just north of the city of Matagalpa.

Nestled in a verdant, sprawling valley surrounded by rugged mountains rising to 3,000 feet, San José was taken over by the state in 1979, after its owner, a general in Somoza's National Guard, fled to Miami. Before the *contra* war, seventy-five permanent residents lived in the tiny wooden shacks scattered along winding dirt roads. By December, however, twenty-three young men from the farm were serving in the army, and the 300 migrant laborers who usually help with the harvest had been transferred farther north to pick in the more dangerous border areas. The only people available to harvest San José's crop were women, schoolchildren on winter break, our brigade and a skeleton crew of experienced men. Because of the shortage of pickers, the farm's production quota had been greatly reduced to 1,000 quintals (about 10,000 pounds) of export-grade coffee beans. Three years ago, San José's workers harvested 1,700 quintals.

Aware that their efforts were directly linked to the economic survival of the country, the *campesinos*

Zachary Sklar, a freelance writer and editor, teaches at Columbia School of Journalism. He visited Nicaragua as a member of the international harvest brigades arranged by the Nicaragua Exchange in New York City.

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worked exceedingly hard—and so did the *brigadistas*. We rose before dawn and were in the fields by 6. On clear days the work was slow and tedious but not difficult. Passing over the young green beans, we plucked the ripe red "*rojitos*" from the branches one by one. The reds, the highest quality beans, are processed and exported, bringing in $140 per quintal. We also picked the dead or diseased black beans, charitably described to me by one *campesino* as "very aromatic." They are separated out and used locally.

We wore baskets tied around our waists, filling them with beans, then emptying them into white 100-pound sacks. Again and again we went through this process, carrying the sacks from row to row. Our backs ached, our hands grew raw from insect bites and when it rained, which it often did, the steep hillsides were turned to mud and we frequently slipped and fell. The monotony of the day's work was broken only by a lunch of rice, beans and tortillas and by the songs and chants of many lands that echoed through the valley. At 3 or 4 o'clock, the toot of a cow's horn sounded in the distance, telling us it was time to quit and weigh in. The results were invariably and laughably the same: the Nicaraguans would each fill about a sack a day; the inexperienced international volunteers, less than half that.

Because the *contras* were an omnipresent threat, we always returned to our quarters before dark. Wherever we went, we were accompanied by armed militia. One who guarded us in the fields was a 64-year-old man with dark, leathery skin and a stubble of gray beard. Every day he sat at the end of a row, hunched in concentration over a notebook, his AK-47 automatic rifle slung on his shoulder. Sometimes he would join me and talk. He said that when Somoza was in power, two of his children had died before the age of 5 from diarrhea and malnutrition. Since the revolution, he had learned to read and write in the adult education program at San José. With a proud grin, he showed me his careful, elegant signature: "Tomás Rugama Zelaya, Nicaraguense."

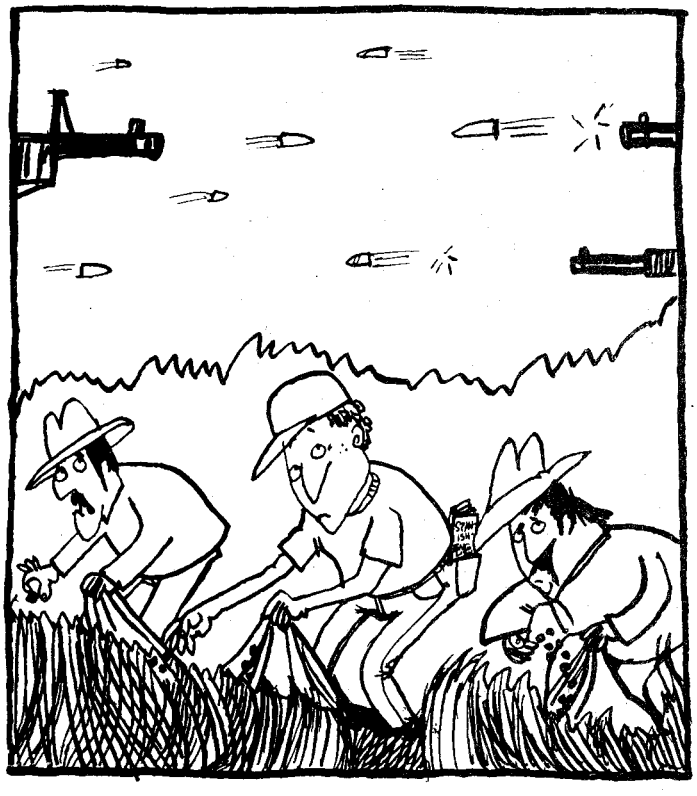
At night, we occasionally heard gunfire and saw red tracers arching like fireworks through the black sky. Still, the protected setting made us feel remote from physical danger, until one day the news crackled over the shortwave radio that a volunteer brigade of twenty-one Telcor (telephone and postal) workers on their way to pick coffee had been ambushed north of Estelí. The *contras* had blown up their bus with mortar fire, hacked the few survivors to death with machetes and set their bodies on fire.

That night our brigade joined hands with the people of San José and sang a hymn for the murdered workers. The memorial service was held in San José's wooden one-room schoolhouse, which is named for a local hero, Salvador González, a teacher whose framed photograph hangs on the wall. In three years, he taught all but five of the previously illiterate residents of San José to read and write. Like the Telcor workers, Salvador González was killed by the *contras*. When he died, on January 19, 1984, he was 22 years old. He left two small daughters, who are now counted among the approximately 500 war orphans in the region.

San José is a productive and well-run farm, but it is underdeveloped and its people are struggling to survive. Most homes have neither electricity nor running water, many children go without shoes, and the basic diet consists of rice, beans and tortillas. Despite those hardships, the *campesinos* I talked to were proud of what they had achieved since the revolution and were ready to defend it.

"Under Somoza we were slaves," said Isabel Espinoza, 44, an intense man with bushy sideburns and long brown hair bristling out from under his Lee work cap. "The bosses used hunger to force us to continue working. All we had to eat was beans, no rice. If you cut an orange off a tree, you were beaten and fined. We worked from dawn till dusk every day, no vacations, for 6 cordobas a day [about 60 cents at the 1978 exchange rate], and that was for the best picker. If you picked less, you were paid less. Women were paid 3 cordobas. Our children died of starvation and disease; we were all illiterate and we lived in terror of the National Guard. If you thought of complaining to Somoza, well, you might as well have thought about the gallows first."

Today, according to Espinoza, everyone at San José eats three full meals a day and all the fruit they can pick. Malnutrition, once so prevalent, has been wiped out, as have polio and diphtheria. The government provides the farm with free medicine and a full-time nurse; all who wanted to, have learned to read and write; and the workers, organized in their own union, participate in decision-making about production. As a result of their protests last spring, base pay was raised to 42 cordobas a day (about $1.50 at the present exchange rate) for men, women and



DRAWINGS BY M.G. LORD

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children and will go up to 62 cordobas after this harvest. They work eight hours a day, six days a week, with Sundays off. Each worker gets fifteen days' paid vacation every six months. Pregnant women receive three months' paid maternity leave, and old workers retire with full pay and benefits. Next year a free day-care center will open, and there are plans to give every family materials to build their own houses and a plot of land and seeds so they can plant their own vegetable gardens.

"Why shouldn't we love our revolution?" Espinoza asked me after reciting this litany. "We have a great amount. This is what we are fighting for. We want peace, but tell Reagan that he'll have to kill us all before we'll give up what we've won."

Because the Sandinistas consider the coffee harvest an integral part of the war effort, it extends beyond the individual farm. When the workers of San José had finished the first picking of their fields, they moved to La Lima, about nineteen miles north, and our brigade went with them. Unlike San José, La Lima is disorganized and poor, even by Nicaraguan standards. The state purchased the farm less than a year ago from a private owner who had neglected it. Our housing facilities were in bad repair. We slept two to a hard wooden bunk in quarters that did not have lights, running water or, for the first four days, latrines.

At a meeting of the local union, which we attended, La Lima's production secretary reported that the farm's harvest situation was critical. About 75 percent of the beans had ripened, and the farm didn't have enough hands to pick them. This was not La Lima's problem alone, he explained. Nearly 35,000 young men from the region were in the army, and all the farms of Matagalpa and Jinotega faced a serious labor shortage. Unless La Lima increased its production immediately, he stressed, a large portion of the valuable red beans would be lost. The workers talked among themselves and then voted unanimously to adopt two measures proposed by the union leaders: to work on Sundays and to begin picking at the first light of dawn. Their sacrifice would not go unrewarded. Pay would increase proportionately for the longer hours, and everyone would get double time for Sundays.

As our skills improved and good weather provided more time for picking, our sacks grew heavier. Workers from neighboring farms joined us, and the days passed quickly. But one afternoon near the end of our stay I looked out at the endless rows of red spreading before me, and I understood for the first time just how shorthanded the war has left Nicaragua. Work as hard as we might, we would never come close to doing it all. About half of those juicy red beans were destined to turn black on the branches or shrivel and fall to the ground.

The Sandinista government had hoped to export 1.4 million quintals of coffee beans this winter, but by late December it was apparent that the harvest would fall far short of that. Until the final figures are in, nobody will know the full economic impact, but the loss of foreign exchange will undoubtedly cause more shortages. The government, already forced to spend 40 percent of the national budget on defense, will have to postpone or abandon worthwhile projects—new schools, health clinics, housing, day-care centers. The transportation system will continue to deteriorate.

Americans easily forget that many of those problems, big and small, are the direct result of the *contra* war. Just how easily, I realized on the day we left La Lima for home. The farm's truck dropped us in the city of Matagalpa, where another truck was to have met us. But it was nowhere to be found. For eight hours we waited as UNAG officials searched for some means of transportation to get us back to Managua. Bored and irritated, some of us complained, just as Nicaraguans do, about the bumbling Sandinista bureaucracy.

When a truck finally arrived, we heard the explanation for the delay. That morning the *contras* had burned down seven private haciendas and one coffee storage plant to the north, near Yalí. As a last reminder of the pervasiveness of the war conceived and financed by our own government, the truck scheduled for us had been commandeered to help transport the eight dead and seven wounded. □

UP FROM THE ASHES—II

Getting Our Act Together

DAVID M. GORDON

On Inauguration Day, less than an hour after Ronald Reagan took his second oath of office, I was having lunch with a small group of local activists in South Bend, Indiana, a state the President carried last November with 61 percent of the vote. The group included two members of the peace movement, a local union official, a committed feminist, a labor educator and an organizer in the black community. The questions bouncing around the sliced turkey and coleslaw echoed what many of us ask nearly every day:

"I feel incredibly discouraged. Are there any rays of hope?"

'Why do we spend so much time fighting with one another?"

"Will it take an earthquake to get a strong progressive movement going in this country?"

This article deals with those agonizing questions, exploring strategies for making the left a more effective political force.

David M. Gordon teaches economics at the New School for Social Research and directs the Center for Democratic Alternatives in New York City. He is co-author, with Samuel Bowles and Thomas E. Weisskopf, of Beyond the Waste Land: A Democratic Alternative to Economic Decline *(Anchor Press/Doubleday).*

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What's the objective? Thousands of activists and millions of people in the United States share an acute distaste for the prospects of Reaganism described in the first part of this series ["Four More Years—A Look Ahead," January 26] and long to move toward a future of economic equality and democracy, social justice and a peaceful global order. Can we make our voices heard? Can we improve our chances of achieving that future?

Getting Started

I think many people on the left agree on the initial guidelines to follow in moving toward the long-term objectives we share. While observing these guidelines will not guarantee any final victories, they can point us in the right direction.

§ As long as we let the right and center determine the questions, we can't provide the answers. That means we must acquire sufficient strength to enable us to pose the questions. That requires planning for the long haul, mapping out targets for the rest of the 1980s, not just the coming year.

§ The impact of large demonstrations is ephemeral. Neither the Solidarity Day march of September 1981 nor the antinuke march of June 1982, both massive and stirring events, had any lasting effect. We need to supplement such rallies with organizing throughout the country, building permanent networks and bases of action.

§ We cannot establish a lasting political movement by riding the coattails of individual politicians. The Progressive Alliance, which seemed so promising in 1979, was set aside and ultimately scuttled for the sake of Edward Kennedy's candidacy in 1980. Jesse Jackson's campaign had a significant impact in 1984, but the Rainbow Coalition's momentum will not be easy to sustain, partly because of the difficulty of translating Jackson's charisma into ongoing political mobilization.

§ In the present conservative climate, no single progressive movement or constituency is strong enough to accomplish its objectives alone. The unions' failure to push through the labor law reform bill in 1978 and the peace movement's inability to persuade Congress to curb defense spending are only two of many examples. We must fashion broader and stronger coalitions that embrace many constituencies and many issues and in which each group is pledged to support mutual objectives.

§ The force of reason is not enough to make political leaders change their positions on many critical issues. The countervailing power of money, lobbyists and inertia is overwhelming. We therefore need to acquire sufficient clout at the local level to force politicians over to our side or out of office. That requires formulating a set of precise minimum demands, increasing our voting strength and running candidates against unresponsive incumbents.

§ More than a laundry list of minimum demands is required, however. To reduce our isolation, we need to project a clear and evocative vision of the future. Ronald Reagan moves people with airy promises of the Emerald City at the end of the yellow brick road. We need to provide an alternative sense of hope and mission.

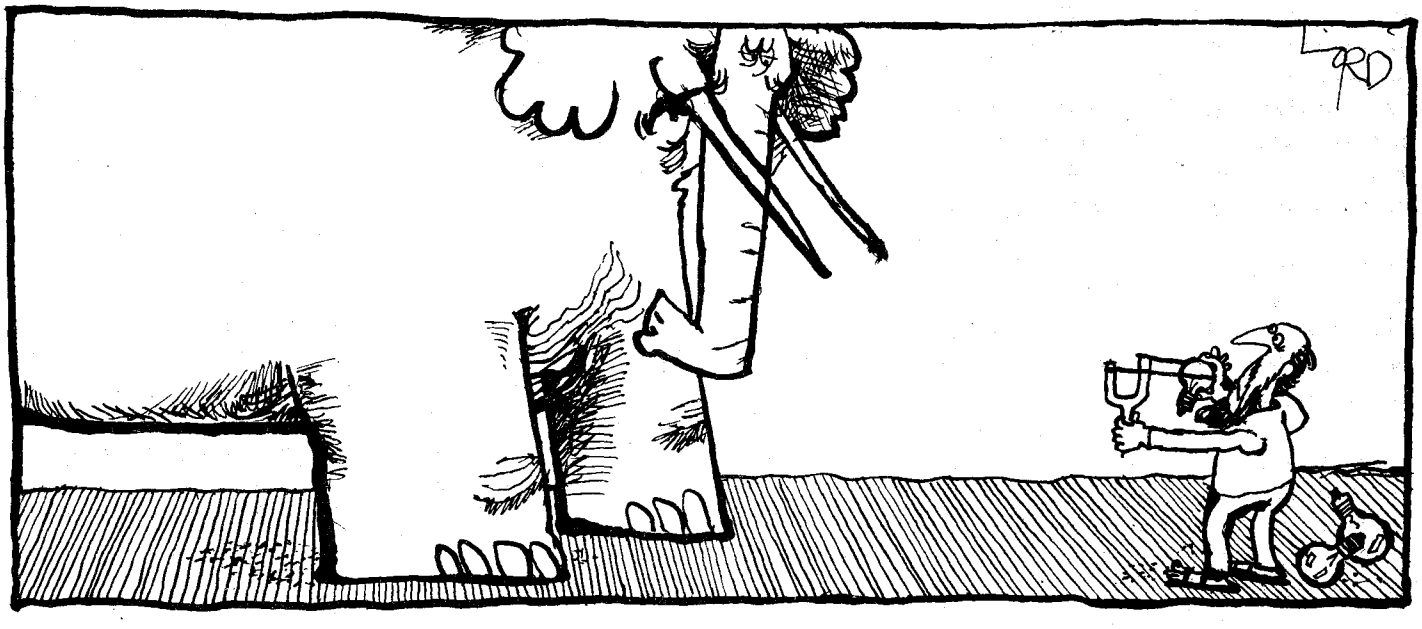
Most of those guidelines are fairly obvious. It is equally obvious that we face huge difficulties in adhering to them. We are divided and poor. We communicate badly among ourselves and lack organizational structures that promote coordination and discipline. All those factors engender continuing mistrust within and across constituencies.

There are no simple solutions to these problems—only a number of different possible approaches. My own experience inclines me toward a particular scenario. I shall argue its advantages here, as briefly as possible.

Toward a Common Timetable

I propose we pursue the following course, or something like it, in the next four years. (I confine it to that period because so much of what happens after 1988 will depend on the outcome of the battle for the Presidency.)

1985: Mobilization against the Administration's second-term initiatives. Work toward a common agenda and program. Planning for a substantial number of electoral cam-



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paigns in 1986. Engaging in selected direct actions, such as current demonstrations against U.S. policy toward South Africa.

1986: Drawing up an agenda by early spring. Supporting a minimum of twenty Congressional candidates pledged to that agenda. Sharing information about progress and problems. National mobilization in late summer behind a common program to make campaigns and candidates visible.

1987: Careful analysis of voting results. Revision and consolidation of agenda in line with those results. Well-planned direct actions in support of key legislation both locally and nationally. Formation or bolstering of state coalitions to devise strategies for participation in the 1988 Presidential process.

1988: Efforts to double or triple, at a minimum, the number of Congressional candidates pledged to support the agenda. Promises by statewide coalitions to back a Presidential candidate only if he or she supports the common agenda. Possible direct actions during primaries and/or before conventions to dramatize concern about issues as well as candidates.

Toward a Common Agenda

The success of this scenario depends on the agenda. We desperately need to build a program that can unite a variety of constituencies and movements in a progressive coalition. Significant progress in that direction is possible if we heed three fundamental considerations:

§ *Multiple Objectives.* A common program must involve general goals, programmatic demands and direct actions. A strong sense of direction is needed to sustain commitment. A progressive manifesto must have specific programmatic priorities so that it is not vague, impractical and unconstructive. And specific targets for direct action supply the ingredients of participation and involvement necessary to build a growing and lasting movement and enable it to apply pressure on the political structure.

§ *The General and the Specific.* A common program should include demands aimed at universal interests and at the most important needs of each constituency within the emerging progressive coalition. Progressives are still too divided for any group to commit itself to coalition work unless and until its own needs are expressly integrated into a common agenda. In other words, no mobilization without representation.

§ *Shaping Our Own Agenda.* Since we are neither as wealthy nor as opportunistic as the right, the future of the progressive movement depends largely on our commitment and energy. Activists and members of progressive constituencies must make the difficult choices required to shape a progressive manifesto. Our program must not come solely from national leaders or small conferences or intellectual journals. It must come from a much broader base of progressive participants.

The first imperative seems difficult but plausible. The second sounds complicated but is probably not impossible. The third may appear to be beyond our reach—although I think not. Modern communications technology has brought such a participatory process within the grasp of even the impoverished left.

It is possible to build up a mailing list of thousands of progressive activists from a broad range of constituencies. (Individual lists have already been compiled by many groups and publications on the left.) Once the list has been assembled, a randomly selected sample of, say, 1,000 respondents, with equal representation from ten different constituencies, could be polled on various issues. To involve a larger number of people the names would be rotated from one group of polls to the next. The reason for using a sample, rather than the entire list, is simply to save money.

The public opinion process would be used to reach agreement on a set of priorities. At the outset, participants in the polling would suggest issues for discussion. Once a month, detailed analyses of those issues would be prepared, with the options carefully framed, and mailed to the 1,000 respondents. Standardized questionnaires would be enclosed. A computer would tabulate, analyze and break down the responses into differences among constituencies, respondent characteristics and intensity of preference. The results would then be reported to everyone on the mailing list. Options that drew considerable support could be placed on a list of common priorities. If the "votes" were inconclusive, the results would at least help clarify differences and identify issues for further examination and polling.

The process would be neither simple nor cheap. But it would have some advantages. The openness of the polling and the range of opinions expressed could help crystallize a progressive agenda. Moreover, the results could be disseminated widely among people who, my observations tell me, do not know to what extent their views are shared by others. The greater the emergent consensus on particular issues, the more credible the argument—to progressive leaders, organizations and candidates—that those specific demands are worthy of support.

Would common viewpoints be generated by such a process? We at the Center for Democratic Alternatives have used a similar technique on a much smaller scale as part of our educational outreach program. We have found that it helps groups debate their views on issues as complicated as tax reform and price controls. When alternative positions are fairly and clearly presented, with at least some supporting data, lopsided majorities frequently surface. And participants seem to feel much greater commitment to the final choices because the process is so open.

To illustrate what a progressive agenda might contain, I have drawn up a sample one, which appears on page 141. Its contents are derived not from the polling process described above but from the Center for Democratic Alternatives' experience with a variety of constituency groups. The exercise suggests, at least to me, that it is possible to formulate an inclusive, comprehensible agenda.

A Common Store of Information

Traveling about the country, I am struck by how isolated many activists feel. They are ignorant of model legislation introduced in other states. And they are victims of the

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An Agenda for Peace, Decency and Democracy

This sample agenda—admittedly debatable—is intended to demonstrate that it is possible to establish medium-term goals that are both inclusive and attainable. In order to keep it manageable, it is limited to three demands in each general area and two for each constituency group. This agenda does not include suggestions for direct action, such as marches or sit-ins, although those must also be part of any evolving agenda. —D.M.G.

GENERAL DEMANDS

Area	Themes	Demands
Economy	Job security and economic democracy Production for people's needs	Massive public employment program Sharp increase in the minimum wage Democratic control over Federal Reserve Board
Foreign Policy	Peace through control over military and nuclear arms Cooperation, not intervention, in the Third World	Freeze on nuclear production, testing and deployment Freeze followed by reductions in military spending End to intervention in Central America and to support for apartheid in South Africa
Democracy and Decency	Involving all Americans in the political process Building stronger communities, not prisons.	Universal voter registration legislation permitting registration by mail and allowing the names of new voters to be added to the rolls through Election Day Public funding of Congressional campaigns Community alternatives to prisons, parole and probation

SPECIFIC DEMANDS

Constituency	Focus of Resistance	Demands
Labor Movement	Employer concession demands	Labor law reform, perhaps moving away from current N.L.R.B. election system State and national plant-closing legislation
Women's Movement	Antiabortion legislation	Pay equity through equal pay for comparable work High quality public child-care services, with guaranteed right to parenthood leave
Minority Movements	Police brutality, vigilante violence and harassment of undocumented aliens	Community economic development (e.g., Massachusetts Community Economic Development Assistance Corp.) Expanded antidiscrimination effort, with strong support for affirmative action
Citizen Action	Toxic-waste dumping	Superfund for cleaning up toxics State and Federal programs for low-cost housing
Senior Citizens	Cutbacks in Social Security and Medicare	Progressive Social Security tax system, possibly integrated with general revenue Health-care cost containment legislation, moving toward national health insurance
Small Farmers	Mortgage foreclosures	Supply management, with protection of fragile lands, gearing production to projected demand Elimination of target-price system, with loan rates pegged at average costs of production
Church Activists	U.S. intervention in Central America	Antihunger program at home and abroad Disinvestment in South Africa
Gays and Lesbians	Laws abridging sexual freedom	Full civil liberties, including custodial and adoptive rights and protection against discrimination in employment and housing Expanded funding and priority for AIDS research
Environmentalists	Nuclear power plants	Restore control of natural gas prices Fund for development of conservation and alternative renewable energy technologies
Liberal Middle Class	High interest rates	Unified and progressive tax reform Expanded public funding for education and health services

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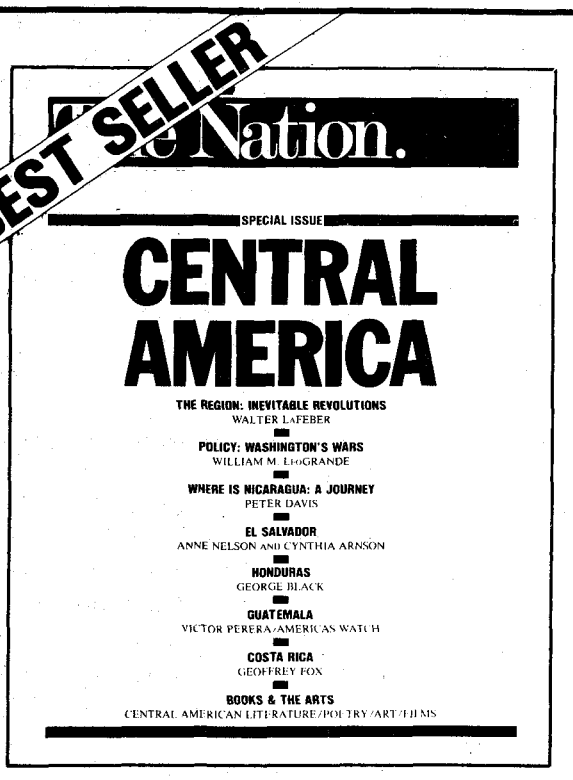

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media's hype about the irresistible conservative trend in this country.

I am also impressed by how effectively the right has used the information at its disposal. In making campaign contributions, for example, conservative groups and the Republican Party give extra support to incumbents who are in trouble and to challengers with a strong chance of winning a seat. According to Thomas Byrne Edsall's analysis in *The New Politics of Inequality*, Democrats give "a disproportionate amount of money . . . to safe incumbents." (That problem was partially addressed in 1984, when progressive political action committees and individual donors paid more attention to marginal races and strategically important campaigns.)

Thus it is vital that we develop sophisticated mechanisms for collecting and sharing information. The microcomputer revolution has made that possible.

What kinds of information? There is a solid amount of data available on the voting records of individual members of Congress, but on other topics and problems we need much better and more accessible sources of information than we now have. For example:

§ Since we rarely have enough money to finance our own public opinion polls, we should develop a file of other pollsters' findings that are relevant to the progressive agenda. Such a data base could be drawn on in shaping language and priorities for the agenda and in mounting campaigns in support of it.

§ We need to improve our methods of collecting and disseminating information on critical legislative initiatives at the state and local level. Many activists invest enormous amounts of time and energy in relatively informal, inefficient and incomplete research for legislative models.

§ As the four-year scenario described earlier suggests, we should develop more effective systems for monitoring election results, analyzing the effects of different kinds of campaign issues and strategies and sharing information about which campaigns need help in which parts of the country.

The list could go on, but the point is that computer technology makes at least three of our informational needs dramatically easier and less expensive than they've ever been.

It makes it possible to store readily accessible information on public opinion polls, model legislation and election results; although the initial investment would be large, the costs over the long run would be low. Computer technology has also reduced the costs of typesetting, substantially easing the problems of distributing printed material. Activist organizations may be able to share information by using modems to tap various data banks and by setting up computer bulletin boards and conference networks at low cost.

Those technical advances point to the possibility of a dramatically enhanced democratic politics within the progressive movement, which means broader sharing of information and wider input. Because careful planning and some significant early investment of time and money will be necessary, it is important that we begin setting priorities as soon as possible.

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Many readers are probably skeptical about the suggestions in this article, since each requires more resources and more careful planning than the one that precedes it.

As anyone on the left with political or fund-raising experience knows, we have pitifully few resources and they are inefficiently applied. Money, in short, might be our Achilles' heel.

The third part of this series will explore the problem of resources on the left, focusing on the troublesome and delicate relationship between progressive funders and activists. It will also examine the equally sensitive matter of who might or should take responsibility for pursuing various initiatives over the short term, taking the first small steps out of the winter of our discontent. □

KHOMEINI'S REVOLUTION

Riding the Wave Of Islam's Past

DILIP HIRO

On February 11, Iran will celebrate the sixth anniversary of the revolution that overthrew the Shah. Today many Western commentators view the Islamic Republic of Iran as reactionary, not revolutionary. They argue that revolutions are future-oriented, fired by the vision of a new society. In Iran, however, the clergy who were in the forefront of the anti-Shah movement and who now run the government believe that the Koran and the Sharia (Islamic law) provide the sole blueprint for the ideal society.

Iranian leaders consider the Western analysts' opinions irrelevant. They care only about how Moslems throughout the world view their regime. They see Iran as re-creating the Islamic society that existed in the days of the prophet Mohammed and Imam Ali. They ousted a corrupt, Westernized elite from power, freed Iran from U.S. domination and reclaimed their independence. Since 1979 they have followed a genuinely nonaligned course.

Such achievements are highly attractive to many Third World capitals, which regard joining either the Soviet or American camp as incompatible with their newly acquired political independence. When nonalignment in the international arena is combined with the lofty morality and anti-imperialism of an Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the mixture becomes irresistible, especially to the young and educated in many Moslem countries. Following Ayatollah Khomeini's line means not only rejecting materialistic capitalism but also atheistic Marxism.

Khomeini's appeal has had widespread repercussions in the Moslem world. In the winter of 1979, fear of a hostile backlash from fundamentalists kept Saudi Arabia's King Khalid from joining the Camp David peace process. In November of that year Khomeini's teachings partially motivated guerrillas who seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Among those involved in the operation was Salafiya, a group which advocates a kind of democratic political Islam based on the practices of their *salafi* ("ancestors"). Mohammed was succeeded by a caliph who was chosen democratically by the populace, they point out, so monarchy has no place in Islam. Khomeini has used the same argument to impugn the rulers of the Persian Gulf states.

To blunt the effect of the Ayatollah's criticisms, the monarchs began enforcing Islamic law more strictly. In Saudi Arabia, revitalized Committees for Public Morality went into action, closing hairdressing salons, for example. The Saudi government has cracked down on all non-Islamic religious services in the kingdom. The rulers of Kuwait yielded to popular pressure to reconvene the National Assembly, dissolved in 1976. In Iraq, President Saddam Hussein was compelled to hold the parliamentary elections that leaders of the ruling Baath Socialist Party had promised twelve years earlier. In contrast, the Iranian regime held five referendums or elections during the first year of the revolution.

The war between Iran and Iraq has taken on the characteristics of a jihad. Although he heads a secular political party, Hussein resorted to traditional Islamic imagery to inspire the Iraqi military. In October 1980 he used the eve of the religious feast Id al-Adha as an occasion to make a televised speech commemorating Iraqi victories in the war and urging his soldiers to cut off their enemies' heads: "Strike powerfully, because you are truly God's sword on earth. The necks you are striking are those of aggressor Magians, collaborators with the lunatic Khomeini." For its

Dilip Hiro is the author of Inside the Middle East *(McGraw-Hill). He is writing a book on Iran.*

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part, Iran portrayed its drive to take Najaf and Karbala, Shiite holy places in central Iraq, as the first stage of a march to Jerusalem to liberate Islam's third-holiest shrine.

While stridently anti-Zionist, Iran has also criticized the secular orientation of the Palestine Liberation Organization. When the P.L.O. split in the spring of 1983, spokesmen for the Islamic Republic leaped to express their misgivings about Yasir Arafat. "The Palestinians are weak because their movement's criteria are not in accordance with genuine Islamic principles," Iranian President Ali Khamanei said. "The people who speak in the name of the Palestinians never speak in the name of Islam." Many Palestinians have now come to consider revolutionary Islam as offering the best hope of liberating their homeland. On the campuses of the Palestinian universities in the West Bank, Islamic fundamentalists are as numerous as P.L.O. supporters.

The clearest signs of Khomeini's popularity outside Iran appear among the Shiites of Lebanon, that country's largest sectarian group. His portrait is displayed in many Shiite homes and businesses. Shiites in occupied southern Lebanon have offered the fiercest resistance to the Israeli military.

Egypt presents a different case. Long a seedbed of Islamic fundamentalism, since 1928 it has also been the home of the Moslem Brotherhood. The Brotherhood has given rise to smaller and more militant groups. Those who assassinated President Anwar el-Sadat belonged to one such organization; they accused him of straying from the path of Islam into the arms of America and Israel. Egypt's fundamentalists hold the Iranian regime in great esteem, but because there are no diplomatic relations between Cairo and Teheran and because Egypt backs Iraq in the war, contacts between Egyptian fundamentalists and Iran are minimal. Still, Khomeini's message is widely known.

Indeed, it has spread across North Africa. In the wake of last year's bread riots in Tunisia and Morocco, the governments there blamed not only communists and Zionists for the disturbances but "Khomeinists" as well. By associating Khomeini with the grievances of the poor, those governments did the Ayatollah and his ideology a great service. All along, the Iranian revolutionaries have portrayed themselves as siding with the wretched of the earth.

The Iranian revolution has inspired Islamic forces even in Malaysia and Indonesia, countries which have been peripheral to Islamic history. In 1973 the military rulers of Indonesia, the world's most populous Moslem state, pressed all Islamic groups to merge into one party, the United Development Party (P.P.P.). The omission of "Islam" from the name was deliberate, and the P.P.P. has been severely restricted in its ability to act as the political opposition. Now the government is pressing it to adhere to the official Pancasila ("Five Principles"), the fundamental tenets of the Indonesian Constitution. One of the principles calls for religious pluralism—contrary to the desires of many of the P.P.P.'s members for an Islamic state.

The military's authoritarianism has closed all avenues of

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dissent. Since mosques are the only places people can gather to speak openly about the government, they are becoming centers of opposition. The brutality with which soldiers butchered Islamic protesters on two occasions in Jakarta last year indicates the regime's nervousness.

Malaysia is also experiencing an upsurge in Islamic sentiment. The rising popularity of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party has the ruling United Malays National Party so worried that the government recently passed a law forbidding the injection of Islam into politics.

Significantly, Indonesia and Malaysia are anticommunist states. The Malaysian Communists were crushed in the late 1950s, and the Indonesian party, in 1965. As capitalism has brought maldistribution, corruption and injustice in its wake, the younger generation of Moslems has developed grievances against the social order. Those Moslems are drawn to revolutionary Islam, as expounded by Teheran, because it offers a way to be both revolutionary and Moslem. They know Khomeini is anti-imperialist as well as anticommunist. They know that the Islamic regime in Teheran actively aids Afghan guerrillas against the Marxist government in Kabul, that it has demanded the unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and has ruled out friendly relations with Moscow until that condition is met.

Since the revolution, Teheran has considered it an Islamic duty to support national liberation movements of the deprived people of the world, whether they are Moslem or not. Among the organizations that have received Iranian backing are the Organization of the Islamic Revolution in the Arabian Peninsula, in Saudi Arabia, and the Association of Bahraini Students. The government has established a department for national liberation. There is also a nongovernmental Islamic secretariat, with offices in Qom, which maintains ties with clergy throughout the world. Every year that body sponsors the World Congress of Friday Prayer Leaders, which draws delegates from more than forty countries. The secretariat is an effective vehicle for creating and sustaining good will toward Iran's revolution among the Islamic circles of participating states. It is also a potential rival to the Islamic Conference Organization, which has its headquarters in Jidda, Saudi Arabia.

Iran has taken a fairly active interest in protecting Moslems living in other countries. According to Article 152 of its Constitution, "the defense of the rights of all Moslems" is a fundamental principle of Iranian foreign policy. Since late 1982, the government has intensified its campaign on behalf of the "oppressed Moslems in the Soviet Union." The object of the campaign was to rekindle religious fervor among Moslems in the southern republics—Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—where four-fifths of the Soviet Union's 45 million Moslems live.

Radio broadcasts beam religious propaganda to those areas, depicting the Kremlin as the seat of Satan's empire. The campaign has had some impact. In late 1983 Turkmenistan, with a population of 2.8 million, was reported to have 300 unofficial clerics, and Soviet officials concede that

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Moslems in Azerbaijan and Tadzhikistan have been influenced too. In those republics people are becoming more vocal in their demand for mosques and religious schools, and growing numbers of women have adopted Islamic dress. Moslems in Azerbaijan are Shiite; the Tadzhiks, whose language is similar to Persian, are culturally close to Iranians. The fact that Teheran-Moscow relations are strained (mainly because the Soviet Union supplies weapons to Iraq) is an additional incentive to Iran to continue its campaign among Soviet Moslems.

Iran has not hesitated to speak out against attacks on Moslem lives and property even when its relations with the government involved are friendly. Teheran is on cordial terms with New Delhi, but when Moslems were attacked during sectarian rioting in India in the summer of 1983, the Iranian parliament passed a resolution condemning the violence. The gesture was well received by the leaders of India's 85 million Moslems, who were disappointed that the Saudi Arabian rulers, the spiritual leaders of the worldwide Moslem community, had chosen to remain silent.

Through a variety of means, the revolutionary regime in Teheran is projecting itself as the spiritual center of regenerated Islam. By so doing, it is offering the global Moslem community an alternative to Saudi Islam, which is increasingly seen as corrupt, reactionary and tied to the United States. □

Dictators

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

From the evidence, one salient fact emerges. This government has no policy for the advancement of human rights. What it has is a ragbag of various, often illogical precepts that are chaotically applied.

"In the Face of Cruelty" takes its title from a comment about the Soviet Union's human rights record, made last year on Human Rights Day, December 10, by Max Kampelman, recently appointed a member of the U.S. negotiating team for arms control talks to be held in Geneva next month. "Silence in the face of cruelty may be complicity, inadvertent as that may be," he said. That is a good description of Reagan's first-term performance, which has featured complicity with a host of human rights violators. The tub-thumping excuses and distortions of the truth on behalf of U.S. client states stand in sharp contrast to the more or less consistent castigation of the Soviet Union. The result is predictable. Human rights has become a counter in a geopolitical struggle, like a hotel in a game of Monopoly.

The basic assumption of the Reagan policy is that the Russians are strong and we are weak. Therefore, anything we do that makes us stronger, or appear stronger, is good. The world is divided between the countries that are for us and those that are for them. The people who run "our" countries preside over legitimate governments and do what they must. Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire and Gen. Augusto Pinochet in Chile fall into that category.

Fortunately for the Reaganites, Jeane Kirkpatrick was a fountain of supporting notions that gave this policy a veneer of respectability. For the political scientists, there is the famed conceit that totalitarians' human rights violations, though they may be exactly the same, are worse than authoritarians' violations. For the democratically inclined, there was a taste of "realism." As one of Reagan's apologists told me recently, some people are genetically and culturally unprepared for democracy. Last October the President applied that dictum to the people of the Philippines:

> I know there are things . . . that do not look good to us from the standpoint right now of democratic rights. But what is the alternative? It is a large communist movement to take over the Philippines.

Back in 1981, Kirkpatrick had said the same thing about Central Americans, who, regrettably, are "used to" tough governments.

According to another Administration nostrum, the United States must not interfere in the internal affairs of another nation. That rationale is always propounded with great seriousness. But it has lost its punch. The Reaganites have consistently attacked the Russians' awful human rights policies and practices. Yet on the grounds of noninterference, they either refuse to criticize their friends' transgressions, as in the cases of Turkey and Haiti, or simply ignore them altogether, as in the cases of China and Yugoslavia. The Russians have formulated their own hypocritical human rights policy, which is a sort of parody of ours. They chastise the United States for its policy toward South Africa and send telegrams protesting the treatment of alleged U.S. political prisoners, often on the anniversary of some notable event in the history of human rights.

Former Secretary of State Alexander Haig launched the Reagan era by declaring that terrorism would replace human rights as a major foreign policy concern. "Human rights" was relegated to propaganda duty against the Soviet Union and its allies, and a handful of rightist countries of no geopolitical significance, such as Uganda and Paraguay, were thrown in for balance. Balance is a highly praised concept in foreign policy.

Four years ago the incoming Administration planned to abolish the State Department's Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, but Congress, which had created the agency, protested. Since then, it has limped along, serving as a public relations office for dictators and a front for "quiet diplomacy" (or, in the case of South Africa, "constructive engagement"). By and large it will certify that an anticommunist government with a bad record on human rights but a strong desire for U.S. military and economic aid is "making progress" toward democracy, though there may be some "problems" remaining. El Salvador, South Korea and Guatemala are examples.

Patt Derian, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Carter Administration, is a writer living in Washington.

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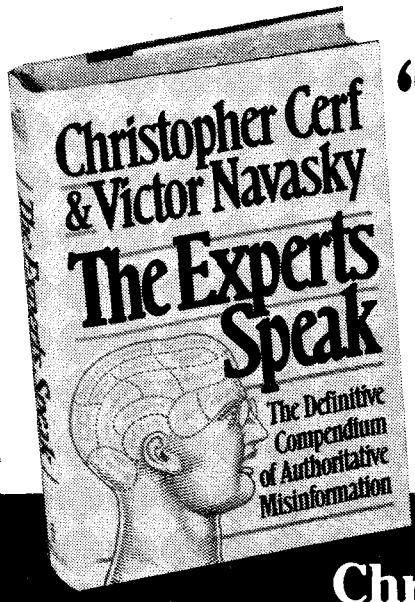

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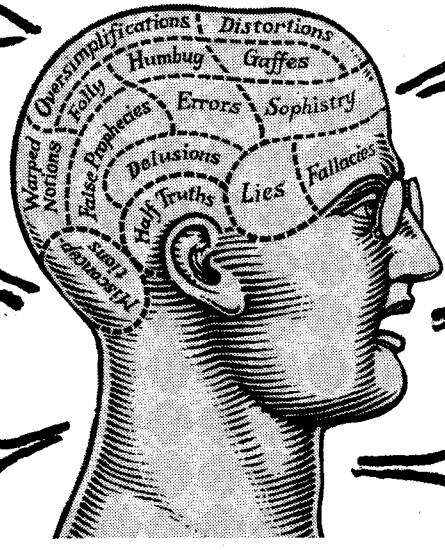

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Occasionally, the bureau is allowed to take a tough line. It made a worthy effort with Rumania, which has a grim record. At a bilateral round-table meeting in Washington, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Elliott Abrams made a forceful presentation of violations to the Rumanians. However, because Rumania does not follow Moscow's script in its foreign policy, courtship is the order of the day (as it was during the Carter years). Abrams's efforts were ignored by the rest of the Washington bureaucracy.

When Abrams spoke out on Uganda's record, the government there complained, and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker rushed to mollify Kampala's leaders. He told them he had come so that "the air can be cleared and the relationship be put on a sound footing." Military and economic aid flowed without interruption.

For the most part, though, Abrams's record is as dismal as the rest of the Administration's. He once explained his kid-glove treatment of Pakistan by saying, "We have to recognize that it takes a hell of a knowledge of Pakistan to be willing to insist in each and every case that we are right and that [Gen. Zia ul-Haq] is wrong." On September 13 he announced that the Chun Doo Hwan regime in South Korea has shown a "pattern of improvement" in human rights. He also asserted that the United States was "absolutely neutral" about the planned return of exiled opposition leader Kim Dae Jung and stupidly endangered Kim's safety by adding, "I told Kim that there would be a possible threat to his security not from his government but from the government of North Korea." That is the kind of clear message an authoritarian government understands: Do what you like, we don't care. And so, it does.

South Africa gets new equipment for its police, increased trade and tourism and a tap on the hand from President Reagan for its mistreatment of the black majority. In the Philippines the Administration tries to distance itself from the tottering government of Ferdinand Marcos but puts its money on the military and remains silent about summary executions and torture by the regime. There and in South Korea the citizens see the United States as a partner of the dictators who oppress them. Many believe that if it weren't for such an arrangement, their governments would have changed for the better long ago.

When Uruguay and Argentina were making the transition to civilian rule, the United States stuck with the military leaders until the day they left office, just in case the elected officials didn't make it. Now America clings with odd desperation to a set of foreign leaders who maintain precarious control over their populations by dint of U.S. material and moral support. Yet in countries that need assistance to maintain democratic government, like Colombia and Peru, no help is forthcoming except aid for the military.

Support for dictatorial regimes works against U.S. national interests in the long run. Administration officials should take to heart the lesson of Greece. The Greek government and people harbor a bitter animus toward the United States because of the warm backing (which included a public embrace by Vice President Spiro Agnew) we gave the Greek colonels during their brief but dreadful dictatorship. Someday, Turkey, South Korea, Zaire, Pakistan, Morocco, the Philippines, Chile and a host of other allies might decide that dependence on, and good relations with, the United States costs more than they are willing to pay.

There is still time for the Reagan Administration to adopt a credible human rights policy and begin to undo some of the damage it has caused in the past four years. It could start by abolishing its double standard. Instead of covering for its friends and castigating only its enemies, it might simply report objectively on the human rights situation in every country. An end to hypocrisy would remove some of the stigma of complicity. Adherence to U.S. laws with human rights provisos would entail a sweeping revision of our foreign commitments, particularly in Central America and South Africa. If the Administration would take such actions, it might gain the benefit of extracting itself from the Central American quagmire with some dignity.

Unfortunately there is not one straw in the wind that indicates that it has contemplated such actions. □

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MARK RUDMAN

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHARITY OF CHARLES PÉGUY. *By Geoffrey Hill. Oxford University Press. 36 pp. Paper $7.95.*

Geoffrey Hill's *The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy* is a book-length poem which takes its inspiration from Péguy's own *The Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc*. Hill intends no ambiguity as regards his attitude toward his subject: "Péguy, stubborn rancours and mishaps and all, is one of the great souls, one of the great prophetic intelligences of our century. I offer *The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy* as my homage to the triumph of his 'defeat.'" The poem opens with the "crack of a starting-pistol," and Jean Jaurès, once Péguy's ally in his support of Alfred Dreyfus, now his enemy through his manipulation of their common ends, lies dead. Hill ponders: Did Péguy kill Jaurès? Did he incite the assassin? But the real issues at stake here are belief and the power of the word.

We should be able to respond to a poem without researching the subject, and it is possible to read Hill's poem without knowing anything in advance about Péguy. It helps to know that he owned a bookstore and edited the journal *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*—

> This is no old Beauce manoir that you keep
> but the rue de la Sorbonne, the cramped shop,
> its unsold *Cahiers* built like barricades,
> its fierce disciples, disciplines and feuds

that he was a socialist and a poet whose work was "confined to a small intellectual élite" in his own time; that he became a symbol of liberty, of human possibility, freedom and integrity in France; that he died when he stood up to chase the German Army in retreat; and that he had written about death on the battlefield before he died. "Dying, your whole life/fell into place," Hill writes.

> Péguy said
> "why do I write of war? Simply because
> I have not been there. In time I shall cease
> to invoke it." We still dutifully read
>
> "heureux ceux qui sont morts."

There used to be the sense that poetry issued from another consciousness, somewhere deep in the mind—"far back," as Roethke put it. Hill's poetry is of this order: bracing and difficult, turbulent and complex. There is pressure on every word to *mean*, and in this poem, the language bears the same stress as Péguy's life, as if, imbued with the desire to mate, each word were propelling itself toward the next:

> bees thrum
> in the crimped hedges and the pigeons flirt
> and paddle, and sunlight pierces the heart-
>
> shaped shutter-patterns in the afternoon

With the same momentum, Péguy imagined victory for Dreyfus, and for France over Germany ("Rather the Marne than the *Cahiers*"), and hurled himself into action.

Péguy thought of writing as taking dictation; he scorned revision, as it interfered with a divine process. His highest praise for a given piece of writing was, "It is dictated." Catholic and socialist, he praised the dignity of labor with a fervor both religious and political. In his life he combined meditation and action. Hill characterizes Péguy's epiphany in these inspired lines:

> Hedgers and ditchers, quarrymen, thick-shod
> curés de campagne, each with his load,
> shake off those cares and burdens; they become,
> in a bleak visionary instant, seraphim
> looking toward Chartres, the spired sheaves,
> stone-thronged annunciations, winged ogives
> uplifted and uplifting from the winter-gleaned furrows of that criss-cross-trodden ground.

The "people" are transformed as they sacrifice themselves for Péguy's sacred *terre charnelle*, carnal earth.

Hill's art is vastly more demanding than Péguy's; his courage and daring are esthetic and linguistic. But both poets reach out for something central to the human condition. Hill relies heavily on the traditional language of English poetry, from Shakespeare to Auden: "The world is different, belongs to them—/the lords of limit and contumely." From the key placement of the word "contumely" and the phrase "the lords of limit" and his use of the latter as the title of his new book of essays, *The Lords of Limit*, Hill seems to be saying that things have not changed as much as we may think. His words have a gravity that is more powerful than sound effects or particular images. In "Redeeming the Time," he refers to "the inertial drag of speech," which must be accounted for by any "enquiry into the nature of rhythm."

Without being visual, his poetry makes you imagine a backdrop of the Renaissance—paintings and tapestries with battle scenes—a thicket of world in a thickness of words, as in this hard-earned and revealing passage from an earlier volume of prose poems, *Mercian Hymns*:

> He willed the instruments of violence to break upon meditation. Iron buckles gagged; flesh leaked rennet over them; the men stooped, disentangled the body.
>
> He wiped his lips and hands. He strolled back to the car, with discreet souvenirs for consolation and philosophy. He set in motion the furtherance of his journey. To watch the Tiber foaming out much blood.

Children scavenging in the ruins. "Swathed bodies in the long ditch; one eye upstaring." Omnipresent mud. There is no relief from this blood and the obsession with violent death.

Hill's early work is sharp and direct. It consists mainly of short poems, each one a whole: "true sequences of pain." His affinities are clear through his fine homages to Celan in *Tenebrae* and to Mandelstam in *King Log*. And there is no mistaking the ferocity in his work. Ted Hughes's *Crow*, to make the inevitable comparison, is playful set beside Hill's darkest passages. In

Mark Rudman is the author of In the Neighboring Cell *(Spuyten Duyvil), a book of poems, and* Robert Lowell: An Introduction to the Poetry *(Columbia University Press).*

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STAR WARS?

A Presidential panel recently called on the government to spend $26.6 billion over the next five years for research into laser weaponry in space. Total cost of this project has been estimated at around $500 billion.

In 1975 I made a contribution to the Ford Administration of a comprehensive analysis which—contrary to the belief of modern physics—explained the true nature of visible light.

Among its many original observations, my paper showed that light simply exists as a quality of radiant matter, and having no independent power of existence, cannot by itself exist in empty space. This prediction from my principles of light was convincingly confirmed in December 1984 when Spacelab astronauts failed to produce auras of light in empty space with an electronic beam accelerator.

Because the intense light produced by a nuclear explosion stands as a cause of damage in the outlying areas away from blast center, my work pointed to a defense which would limit this light, and reduce the full potential of these weapons on surrounding towns and villages of major targets.

In order to insure the balance of deterrence I later delivered a copy of my work to the Soviet Embassy. Since receiving these principles of light, the Soviets, who were deeply committed to space-based lasers, have abandoned all their research in this area.

Because the technical aspects of a space laser appear feasible, it is taken as granted that the basic physics are good. If President Reagan believes this, he is receiving poor counsel from his scientific advisers. $500 billion is a lot of money, but it will not buy a beam of light in space.

To alert concerned people to the futility of a Star Wars defense, I am offering for the first time my 150-page analysis of visible light. Apart from its effect upon defense matters, this clear and readable document cuts away the foundations of modern physics and reopens a part of the mind which modern man has forgotten.

For a copy of the original manuscript, send name, address and $25 check or money order to J.R. Gibbons, 615 Ninth Avenue, New York, NY 10036.

"You have produced a most original and fascinating study on the phenomenon of light."

—Nelson A. Rockefeller
Office the Vice President
1975

"Funeral Music," an essay at the end of *Mercian Hymns*, he tells of "attempting a florid grim music broken by grunts and shrieks" and, in an image that is emblematic of his own project, cites "the chronicler of Croyland Abbey" as "writing that the blood of the slain lay caked with the snow which covered the ground and that, when the snow melted, the blood flowed along the furrows and ditches for a distance of two or three miles." And, one might add, from there into the body of his next decade's work.

In *The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy*, Hill's violence has found release through the use of the third person. He interweaves his own voice with Péguy's; he filters his concerns through Péguy and, in the process, gains a levity absent from his earlier work, though the tone is one of "dour panache" (to borrow a phrase from the poem), a cross between low tragedy and high farce:

> A rooster wails remotely over the marsh
> like Mr. Punch mimicking a lost child.
>
> At Villeroy the copybook lines of men
> rise up and are erased. Péguy's cropped skull
> dribbles its ichor, its poor thimbleful,
> a simple lesion of the complex brain.

Hill has always been at home with the sublime. He applauds Péguy's willingness to sacrifice, as long as his moral code is constant, in a style that is dense, not ornate. But he also sees human suffering as a consequence of history's mischievousness—except that the joke is at our expense. "History commands the stage wielding a toy gun,/rehearsing another scene"; it is perverse, at once "supreme clown" and "dire tragedian." Péguy allows Hill to introduce an element missing from his previous books: humor, albeit a kind of black humor, closer in essence to Webster and Ford than to Heller or Pynchon. Listen to this passage, timed to the rhythm of the newsreel:

> The brisk celluloid clatters through the gate;
> the cortège of the century dances in the street;
> and over and over the jolly cartoon
> armies of France go reeling towards Verdun.

Hill is precise, careful to show how tenuously meaning cleaves to a comma, a line break: "To dispense, with justice; or, to dispense/with justice." His harsh, crabbed style, with its rugged diction, does not lend itself to length. The quatrain is his primary medium in all his books, and he has few, if any, contemporary rivals in his ability to handle it:

> This fear strikes hard and is gone
> And is recognized when found
> Not only between dark and dawn,
> The summit and the ground.
> ("Metamorphoses," *For the Unfallen*)

And from *Tenebrae*, the book that precedes *The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy*:

> I shall go down
> to the lovers' well
> and wash this wound
> that will not heal

His variable rhyme schemes, alternating *a a b b* and *a b b a* with the more conventional *a b a b*, argue against monotony. And he writes as though the solution were locked in the quatrain itself. Péguy also used the quatrain frequently, but his formal impulse was almost the opposite of Hill's: where Péguy expands, Hill contracts. The only time the sections in *The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy* run on is in the poem's most significant stanza, when Péguy meets the death he has so assiduously sought, his own:

> So, you have risen
> above all that and fallen flat on your face
> 5
> among the beetroots, where we are constrained
> to leave you sleeping and to step aside
> from the fleshed bayonets. . .

It is through such density that a poem of only 400 lines can make a book.

There are some false moves in the poem tonally, a certain archness, as when Hill refers to Rimbaud's "Je est un autre" as "that fatal telegram," and reminds me that I prefer him where he's more cryptic and elliptical. His strange brand of academic formality (which mars the essays in *The Lords of Limit*) is also off-putting in his otherwise concise and informative afterword. Citing T.S. Eliot's interest in Péguy—clearly to establish Péguy's undeniable importance to his audience—he writes that "T. Stearns Eliot, M.A. (Harvard), who made reference to Péguy's life and work in a series of university extension lectures in 1916, noted that he 'illustrates nationalism and neo-Catholicism as well as socialism.'" It is hard to tell whether he is trying to parody the academic or embody it.

Hill is one of the few contemporary

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poets whose work must be reread in order to be understood. He forces the reader to sound out the meaning: work of this density can only be grasped through the ear. He is not merely one of the best English poets but one of the best poets writing in English. Although I think *Mercian Hymns* is Hill's best work, *The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy* shows him stretching in new directions, rescuing himself from direness, becoming more attuned to dramatic possibilities and enlarging his range. □

The Paradox of Pride

WILLIAM S. McFEELY

BLACK MASTERS: A Free Family of Color in the Old South. *By Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark. W.W. Norton. 422 pp. $22.50.*

NO CHARIOT LET DOWN: Charleston's Free People of Color on the Eve of the Civil War. *Edited by Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark. University of North Carolina Press. 174 pp. $16.95.*

In August 1860, a desperate young woman called on Joseph Dereef, one of the most respectable lumber merchants in Charleston, South Carolina, begging him to tell the authorities that her grandmother had been a free woman, that her mother had also been free, and that therefore she had been born free. Dereef knew all that to be true, but he could not help; as a free person of color, he could not testify in a legal proceeding. The woman, unable to get documentation proving that her mother had not been freed illegally after the 1820 law prohibiting manumission, faced enslavement.

That woman—we do not know her name—was one of the quarter-million freeborn or freed Afro-Americans (mostly of mixed African and European ancestry) who shared the South with 4 million slaves and 8 million Euro-Americans. In *Slaves Without Masters*, Ira Berlin has described the marginal life that most free people of color led. But in a few cities, such as New Orleans, Baltimore and Charleston, and occasionally in the country, they had a firm hold on valuable skilled-labor jobs. With a strong sense of self-worth derived, in part, from a paradoxical pride in their aristocratic slaveholder ancestors, these determined people had established themselves in a position between slaveholder and slave. Their existence did considerable damage to the "positive good" doctrine, which maintained that Africans were happiest in bondage.

At the time the young woman visited Dereef, the trustworthy, traditional understandings that had long been sufficient protection for the accepted mulatto class were being broken. Responding to the demands of men like James M. Eason, a successful foundry owner who was determined that white mechanics should have the lucrative skilled jobs held by free people of color, Charleston's Mayor Charles Macbeth had begun aggressively to enforce the letter of the slavery laws. If Dereef's caller had been willing to register as a slave to save her job, she would have received a badge enabling her to work for wages, but she and her children would have lost their most cherished possession, freedom.

In *Black Masters*, their brilliant study of the self-consciously respectable, dignified free people of color, Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark liken the crisis that these Americans faced to the one encountered eighty years later by the Jews of Hitler's Germany. In the nineteenth-century South, too, there were knocks on the door as police came to take people from their homes; the terror was that of "an antebellum *Krystalnacht*." We have long known that restrictions on manumission curbed the possibilities of freedom for Southern slaves, that Northern states prohibited the entry of free black people, that free families lived in fear of kidnappers. Until this study, however, no one had fully documented the suffering caused by the systematic, legal re-enslavement of freed people and the enslavement of those born free. Like Booker T. Washington, with his title *Up from Slavery*, Americans have preferred a progressive view of race relations to one that comprehends the possibility that things can change for the worse.

Despite Johnson and Roark's almost uncanny ability to match scraps of facts found in seemingly unyielding documents and re-create these people's lives, we do not know the fate of the young woman who called on Joseph Dereef. We do know, however, that many brown Charlestonians fled north if they could produce papers satisfactory to a ship's captain, leaving behind relatives and untended property. One who contemplated emigration was an upcountry gentleman named William Ellison, who had many business acquaintances and a son-in-law in Charleston. Undeterred by stories of real-estate men standing avariciously outside the Charleston houses of free mulattoes, Ellison stayed, but he did send his grandchildren north to school. Had he gone, he would have left behind more property than any other refugee; Ellison was the richest freedman in the South.

Born in 1790 and freed, perhaps by his white father, in 1816, April Ellison, as he was then known, learned the craft of cotton gin making. Soon, he was famous as the maker of the best gins in Sumter District, South Carolina, and became a rich man. He went to court to dispose of his slave name, and bought not only the house of a former governor and a pew on the main floor of the Episcopalian church (behind the pews of the white communicants and beneath the gallery where blacks sat) but also slaves to work his plantation and his business. He was even more skilled as a businessman than as a craftsman. The authors, unable to explain just how he amassed his fortune and guessing that thrift did the trick, have probably overlooked a shrewd use of credit. Ellison undervalued his estate for the 1860 census taker; his house, shop, lands and sixty-three slaves were worth more than $100,000. There were richer nabobs in Sumter District, but not many.

Johnson and Roark came to know Ellison through letters found in 1935 by children playing under a house that he had owned. (The letters are collected in *No Chariot Let Down*, along with notes so rich that they form a fine work of social history in themselves.) They wisely decided against a biography of Ellison, who was something of a stick, in favor of the engrossing story of the relationship between the upcountry Elli-

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sons and the community of mulatto people in Charleston. It pains the authors that freed people displayed no discernible concern for their fellows of African descent who remained in slavery, but they do not flinch in the face of unpleasant fact. When their exhaustive search of records suggests that Ellison coldbloodedly sold his slaves' female children, presumably because he thought they would not be useful in his business, they tell us so.

The free mulattoes of this study were prosperous tradespeople or were engaged in service pursuits such as catering, but in their perception of themselves and in their deportment, they were starchy aristocrats. They strained to achieve a respectability beyond any possible reproach from their less constrained white neighbors; they distanced themselves resolutely from the slaves. They were snobbish with respect to color, excluding black people from their brown societies. At the same time, they must have lived in terror of slipping from the position of economic and social security they had painstakingly achieved. They firmly adhered to the rule of South Carolina slaveholders, not only by owning slaves if they could afford to do so but by supporting the Confederacy in the Civil War. They were, for a time, rewarded for their loyalty. Members of the slaveholding gentry, some of whom had long been William Ellison's customers, rallied to defeat the enslavement movement and Eason's legislative efforts to prohibit nonwhites from holding skilled jobs.

During the war, William Ellison diverted his efforts from making gins and growing cotton to raising food for the Confederacy. His grandson John Wilson Buckner, light enough to be accepted in the army, was wounded at the siege of Battery Wagner. (Other free people of color, the soldiers of the famous Massachusetts 54th, also fought there, on the Union side.) Ellison died in 1861. When the war ended his sons and their families stayed on at Drayton Hall and Wisdom Hall, but nothing the Ellisons had done endeared them to their slaves, who, when emancipated, were unwilling to remain and work the farms. No longer planters or gin makers, the younger Ellisons opened a general store that drew white customers. When enfranchised, they registered as members of the antifreedmen Democratic Party.

Black Masters is superb history. The authors' diligence in the archives is matched by their narrative skill. Despite the co-authorship, the voice of the book is clear. In fact, this work is admirable in every respect except its title, which is inaccurate. The subjects of *Black Masters* were brown. The black/white titles of books that record the fascinating madness of that thing we call race simply codify an absurdity. Our American hues are too rich for such simplicity; chalk on a blackboard won't do it. □

THE MUSIC IN THE SILOS

Cylindrical arks
sit and steam,
locked away
from the rain.
Electrons race
through their tubular
superstructure.
Men and women
have put death
in these, and also
money
and what money can't
buy: music,
braces for teeth,
geography text books,
a vacuum cleaner
for subway stops.
The arks carry
seeds,
convalescent
sun rooms, and
paint. Nothing alive
is within, however,
no crow or dove
can leave to
find
firm ground
and return.
There is no known way
to open the arks
to remove
the possibilities
they hold.
And once they are lofted
onto the
waters
all that can be
unloaded
from them
is
death.

Tom Wayman

All Mixed Up

ANTHONY HEILBUT

MR. NOON. *By D.H. Lawrence. Cambridge University Press. 292 pp. $24.95.*

Nowadays admirers of D.H. Lawrence have it hard. If they take him seriously, they must countenance a lifelong series of repellent statements about women, blacks, Jews and gays. But to be fair to Lawrence is to recognize that his oscillations and ambivalence on a number of matters reflect the edgiest sensibility of his time. To be fair to him also means acknowledging that the dreadful Lawrence can, in the space of a narrative clause, transform himself into someone quite different; as a literary quick-change artist, he can make grammar seem downright therapeutic. One would have to admit that he took women seriously, had Jewish friends, was no more racist than his contemporaries and gave ample evidence of his own homoerotic temperament, swooning before humpy soldiers though he loathed militarism. All this makes him endlessly provocative, but it also makes his defenders an uneasy crew.

So the appearance of *Mr. Noon*, a 1921 Lawrence novel that nobody knew existed, evokes a certain alarm: Will he embarrass us again? Happily not, at least not if we're willing to meet him halfway. There's a lot of familiar stuff here; the excesses in Lawrence usually signify his urge to repeat something until he gets it right. This is a cooler—and less inspired—D.H. than the author of *Women in Love*, but it's invigorating to see him simplify and even kid the themes that previously drove him nuts. Because it's more accessible, *Mr. Noon* displays two appealing sides of the author: his role as a working-class intellectual, alienated from his class but defensive outside it, and his obsessively literary bent. Whether or not this is a great novel, it's as sharp a work of English letters as you'll read this season.

Lawrence did not work very hard to come up with a story here, but this is no

Anthony Heilbut is the author of Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America from the 1930s to the Present *(Beacon Press).*

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defect; plots generally bring out his turgid side, his itch to construct systems—re-imagine politics, rethink science—out of his latest cockamamie notions. Instead he gives us two sections. In the first, Gilbert Noon, a small-town math teacher, plays around with his colleague Emmie, maybe gets her in trouble, and skips out. (More accurately, Lawrence himself abandons both Gilbert and Emmie by saying, "Let them go to hell.") In the second, longer section, a transparent *roman à clef*, Noon becomes D.H. Lawrence courting Frieda Weekley, here named Johanna. So far critics have liked the second section and missed its important connection with the first. They don't see that the young Noon's life provides a text that the other Noon must then rewrite. Because he lived it himself, Lawrence knows about young intellectuals newly emerged from a hidebound but vivid working class, and because he's a writer, he can verbalize their internal conflicts. As if they are bilingual, these people understand their parents' folksy speech ("I say to him, she's your daughter, I didn't whistle her out o'th' moon") while their own language is crammed with literary snippets, the tokens of professional rectitude. Lawrence situates his people in their institutions; a self-confessed lover of hymns, he portrays evangelical churches as both alluring and destructive. It's all here, the beautiful music (a church choir "grittily" moans a hymn which black Americans know as "The Day is Past and Gone," their archetypal "moan") and the thwarted sensuality (since the church can't provide an adequate "climax," the youngsters go from praying to spooning). When Gilbert doesn't marry Emmie, she picks a more conventional fellow for the comforts of a semi-detached home and an allotment garden. It's a life "safe as houses" that both Noon I and Noon II turn down; the class matrix unites them in their recoil.

It's surprising to see how old-fashioned Lawrence seems here in his obsession with literature, his conviction that everything new must be worked out in speech, or at least given a literary gloss. Like some character out of Joyce, Noon possesses a mind filled with the detritus of cultures high and low—popular songs, hymns, epic poems. Just as Lawrence will take on other writers, regardless of their time or place, Noon battles with Goethe and Tennyson, Tolstoy and Baudelaire. In this novel, more clearly than elsewhere, Lawrence makes such literary hubris the basis of class warfare. Gilbert is defiantly not a "European professor," and he gets a special kick out of Johanna's father calling him a "common lout" because it sounds so good in German.

Lawrence the littérateur spends much of the book addressing the "gentle reader." In keeping with this eighteenth-century affectation, he displays a Fieldingesque coyness, taking up narrative space with chitchat so that the lovers can screw in private; hits out at Swift, with whom his "wind-filled" critics have invidiously compared him; and, finally, demolishes Samuel Rich-

FROM A FAR CRY, A RETURN TO THE CITY

Again its familiar skyline swims
into the blanketed vision of the traveler
who after miles of snow, the rear of farms,
the rusting bridges of an iron technology,

welcomes architecture challenging
from the scale of the long-distance train.
The template of its horizon suggests
a lost branch of physical taxonomy

where patterns of heights fix character,
as surgeons once diagnosed illness
from the lumps of the head. Entering
its arterials, like a bacterium, one

loses the outward view, discovering
a gaudy language in the graffiti
of the dispossessed. But even here, having
lost through absence the anger of caution,

one for a time enjoys the passport
of the immigrant, one's future tongue
awkward and strained, and sees from within
its resemblance to the body of other capitals:

subject to scales of diminishment, unused
to hours or calendar, populous with
forlorn generals horseback in traffic circles.
Whether center of a temperate duchy

or a dictator's tropical madness, each
individuates the argument of its own case,
though alike as any terminal where the tired
can store their luggage and find a telephone.

SUTCLIFFE AND WHITBY

The sea, that problem Euclid never solved,
whose black rooks curve
linear demeanors of the shore, burns

under the abbey, a little selfishness
made grace. Neither we, nor the stable-yards,
nor the knacker's tumbled house,

the dead harpooner's cottage, color
the lobster-claw piers pinching
this resort's slummy river from sea,

where the whale's cheesy body wept into wicks,
and jet was ground into tokens
for the living for the dead, a grief of soft coal.

Singers in the sea-wracked graveyard
make early music an English
proposition. Down from the heather

where sheep gather by milestones,
the rude parishioners clatter floors
their fathers' fathers' fathers laid.

We are only the false-coated crew,
the humbled watchers stirring at shipwreck,
while men in open boats oar out and back.

What mastery lies in leaving?
From history fails one landscape, not
the sea exposing its fragile negatives.

William Logan

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ardson's moral posture. Yes, he assumes his gentle reader is a woman, but like a literary Phil Donahue, he becomes her advocate by seeking to change her nature. Rather than gentle, he wants her rambunctious, surly, brooding. This is Lawrence's style of feminism—indivisible from his comment that Mary Magdalene's only fall occurred when she started washing feet.

But give Lawrence any room and his tone will eventually turn coy and smarmy. Give him still more room and his irony and humor will bring him to his senses. In fact, his narrative's great strength is the juxtaposition of essayistic discourse and tightly constructed dramatic scenes. In the space of a few pages, he'll show the lovers to be obsessives on the verge of solipsism, then he'll cut the claustrophobic mood by some irreverent wordplay and remind you that his Gilbert is pompous and his Johanna a chatterbox. A typical transition occurs after a scene in which Gilbert repeats the old Lawrence line that modern women think too much: "I should leave off thinking, if I were you." Anticipating every woman who's detected lechery in those words, Johanna replies, "Yes, you're just like all men. You'd like me to." Outside of an almost blasphemous allusion to *The Rainbow* in *Mr. Noon*, this is Lawrence's most astonishing act of self-criticism.

A similar narrative turbulence characterizes Gilbert and Johanna's evolving emotions. For a prophet of marital union, Lawrence is terrific at detailing the stuff that keeps lovers apart. In *Women in Love*, Gudrun and Gerald are constantly battling for the top spot; Lawrence shows her triumphing by a perverse display of pity, an emotion henceforth revealed as infused with hatred. Gilbert and Johanna are a happier couple, but they too shuffle and do-si-do to avoid commitment.

Although Lawrence insists that Gilbert is representative, it's hard to see any lover duplicating his tricks. Many men might appreciate Johanna's dilemma on leaving husband and children. But how many of them would empathize to the point of taking men more seriously—and sensually—than she does? Gilbert admits that Johanna's husband was better in bed than he; that her German lover merits a positively Rilkean lament over his untimely death; that he's attracted to the young American with whom she sleeps; that he was so smitten with a peasant who courted her that he resents having to finish what the peasant started. Not that Johanna can't see through him. When he blithely forgives her infidelity, she discovers a "convulsion of selfishness by means of which he soared above a fact." Since Lawrence is a genius at rendering the grammar and logic of emotion, he's always alert to a denial of logic arising out of jumbled emotions—witness his condemnation of Gerald Crich in *Women in Love*: "Without bothering to *think* to a conclusion, Gerald jumped to a conclusion."

A Lawrence reader knows that whenever heterosexual romance is most intense, a homoerotic alternative is in the wings. Where he used to be obsessed with the "blind mindless thighs" of English miners, European laborers now enthrall him with their "fierce naked knees." But while admitting that he adores the German soldiers, he deplores their militarism, much as in *Women in Love* when Birkin decided, after wrestling with Gerald, that he was even further from the man he loved than from the woman. Lawrence tries to cure Gilbert Noon by insisting on an opposition of souls, but this sounds less like emotional confidence than Esthetic Realism. More intriguing for being enlivened by gesture and image is his distinction between Johanna, a sea gull, and Gilbert, a land hawk. This becomes particularly resonant when you recall that Birkin denied Gerald precisely because the industrialist couldn't "fly away from himself in real indifferent gaiety." Johanna is a fluid if buxom nymph; she loves to dance and swim. Gilbert is awkward and aloof, too "sharp and intensely local" to fly.

Because Gilbert is so, the novel achieves great poignance when it situates him on a strange continent, somewhere between Italy and Russia, ripped from his origins, both "un-Englished" and suspicious of all things foreign, men and women, nature and culture (although he's totally won over by German food; outside of Brecht, it's hard to find another writer so smitten with black bread). He's attuned to signs of political corruption, finding them where nobody else looks. Thus from his own lusting for the soldiers he derives an indictment of "militaristic insolence . . . parvenu imperialism." Like a bisexual Musil, he tweaks Austrian naïveté—and forecasts the empire's collapse—by focusing on uniforms that fit the plump imperial soldiers an inch too snugly. As a perspective on politics, this is undeniably special, a kind of oom-pah-pah Marxism.

Is all this enough for a novel? It's certainly enough for a book. If the story's unfinished, the Lawrencian curve is nonetheless evident, for in his novels, the intimations of life lived afterward are always more compelling than any artificial full stop. His ideal marriage is a permanent revolution, an endless apprenticeship, a cycle of deaths and rebirths. When Lawrence is convincing, he's eminently practical but not irrational: the lad from Nottingham won't sacrifice his mother wit to the socialites and professors. That's why after seeming to offer a literary manifesto for free love—in the beginning was the word, so why not a love as free as speech?—he withdraws his homemade jargon and declares that in the beginning was not the word but something more materially useful; he'd guessed that our prehistoric hands developed before our brains. Lawrence concludes by recalling the English Noon. Gilbert couldn't have achieved his new knowledge, his "sensual soul," with Emmie. He needed the fight with Johanna as Lawrence needs to fight with you, "gentle reader"; it's the fight that clears up his muddle. □

FILMS.

ANDREW KOPKIND

A Passage to India

Years ago, in a student quarter of London, there was an Indian restaurant of no great distinction other than its custom of serving a side dish, with all its meals, called Bombay Duck. This was a rank condiment of desiccated fish strips with the texture of pemmican, the salinity of baccalao and the flavor of cardboard. You don't see it much anymore, but it was a popular accompaniment in those days. The waiter would bring it as soon as diners were seated, and although the dish hardly came as a surprise to habitués of that establishment, he invariably gave a little speech of presentation. "Bombay Duck. Tastes like chicken. Use like bread. Is fish!"

As there, so here; as then, so now. There's something fishy about the epic feast David Lean serves up in *A Passage to India*, a classically conceived, beautifully constructed and exquisitely

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 3PM

Ethical Culture Society
2 West 64th Street (near Central Park West)
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Tickets $10 and $25--$50 with reception. Advance purchase suggested. For information call (212) 924-8289.

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THE GOOD FIGHT

A documentary about the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the Spanish Civil War, to benefit the Democratic Socialists of America, DC/MD.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 8 PM

Inner Circle Theater
2105 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
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Panel with the filmmaker
and a veteran will follow the film.

Tickets $10 at the door, in advance at **Common Concerns** bookstore, or reserved by writing to DSA DC/MD, 1346 Connecticut Avenue N.W., #810A, Washington DC 20036.

PUBLIC MEETING
THE AMERICAN MOVEMENT FOR WORLD GOVERNMENT

A Roman Catholic perspective
on world government

Speaker: Dr. Joseph J. Fahey, director of peace studies, Manhattan College

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 7 PM

Willkie Memorial Building
20 W. 40th Street (off Fifth Avenue)
First Floor Board Room
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Refreshments and conversation will follow the event. Suggested donation $3. For more information call (212) 840-9452.

DISCUSSION
THE REAGAN RE-ELECTION AND THE MEANING OF THE 1980S

What future does liberalism have in the face of Reagan's overwhelming second victory?

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 8 PM

The Cooper Union Great Hall
7th Street between Third and Fourth Avenues
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Free Admission.

Participants: John Judis, columnist, In These Times; Colleen O'Conner, editorial page editor, The Bergen County Record; Randy Rothenberg, author, The Neo-liberals: The Men Who Are Changing America. Moderator: Fred Siegal, Cooper Union, author, Troubled Journey: From Pearl Harbor to Ronald Reagan.

executed movie which pretends to be what it is not. It looks like an epic. We know this because it lasts for two hours and 40 minutes and contains several extremely long shots of antique trains chugging across sunset horizons. Its romantic musical score, which sometimes evokes "Lara's Theme" in Lean's bona fide epic *Dr. Zhivago*, is played by a thousand heavenly strings. It has faceless brown multitudes, colorful colonial festivities and an elephant. But if Lean came to *India* to find an epic subject, he was misinformed.

E.M. Forster's celebrated novel, published in 1924, is intimate despite its exotic locale; interior despite scenes of furious activity; intensive despite the breadth of the country it concerns and the societies it covers. Set against a historical backdrop with political props, it is about neither history nor politics, at least in the ordinary epic sense. It is a novel of crosscultural manners, psychological struggle and philosophical speculation. Forster's major characters are subtly conceived and their behavior is always ambiguous; ditto for their relationships. The period of the plot is brief; no sweep of centuries buries the business in timeless sands. If Lean were not overwhelmed by the size of the subcontinent where he filmed his movie, he might have looked to his own *Brief Encounter* rather than to *Lawrence of Arabia* for an appropriate model.

In Forster's story, the encounter in question takes place between Adela Quested and her passion, between her Anglo-Saxon temperament evident on the surface and a savage sexuality burning down below. Yes, that old post-Victorian chestnut falls again from the thrusting tree of English lit: middle-class British virgin (de facto or de jure) gets turned on in the Third World by native heat, art and legend, or just plain dirty talk. It must have been quite a sensitive subject in the 1920s, because the Awakening drove writers to extremes of sexual symbol and metaphor. Few modern novels are more out of control than D.H. Lawrence's hilarious *The Plumed Serpent*, in which the unfulfilled Kate Leslie gets "awakened," and much more, by a Mexican layabout who could be the god Quetzalcoatl.

Now we have Lawrence of India. Forster's Miss Quested (Judy Davis), a spiritual sister of Kate Leslie, is on her way to India to see about the possibility, or at least the logic, of marrying Ronny Heaslop (Nigel Havers), a zircon in the crown of the British raj, currently serving as a civil magistrate in the (fictional) provincial capital of Chandrapore. Ronny's mother, Mrs. Moore (Peggy Ashcroft), accompanies Miss Quested on the journey, which is heavy with portent. At dockside in Bombay we have seen already that British rule in India is doomed by its own pomposity, that imperial comfort is insupportable in the face of native squalor, and that something narsty is going to happen to Miss Quested if she doesn't mind her manners.

Both English ladies are liberal and they are easily offended by the inequality between rulers and ruled. They scorn the pomp and the polo and yearn to experience "the real India." For Mrs. Moore, a premature post-Christian, that has to do with the alternative spiritual life style expressed by Professor Godbole (Alec Guinness), the local Hindu sadhu. For Miss Quested it is the hungry I of the sweaty, excitable Moslem physician Dr. Aziz (Victor Banerjee). Through the efforts of the integrationist schoolmaster Fielding (James Fox), another liberal Briton, Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested take tea with the two Indians, and before long most of this crowd is traipsing out to the Marabar Hills (hence, the epic elephant), on a psychosexual, spiritual pilgrimage to mysterious caves and the climax of the story. *Boum* goes the echo from the depths. *Zing* go the strings of their hearts. Atop the dusty domes Mrs. Moore loses God, Miss Quested encounters her id, and Dr. Aziz discovers that British liberalism is a mixed blessing at best.

Write like romance. Shoot like epic. Is not! Forster's India was antiromantic, impaired, *off*. Chandrapore was "scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish [the Ganges] deposits so freely." The Marabar caves were boring, empty, unholy and undecorated. Miss Quested was unattractive and neurotic; Mrs. Moore was not the saint others thought her; Aziz was tiresome and abrasive. Lean knew all that—his movie is serious, intelligent and deliberate—and he apparently wanted to be faithful to Forster's conception, but the form the director chose is always at odds with the material at hand. As a result, he had to cut and paste to restore the romance, remove the impairments, keep it *up* instead of off. Lean clears up the mystery of the cave, and thus destroys the essential ambiguity of the novel. He adds a

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scene in which Miss Quested comes upon a trove of Hindu porn on ancient temple ruins, thus making literal and banal what was once subtle and suggestive. He leaves out the crucial motivation for Mrs. Moore's unexpected flight from India before the conflicts are resolved. He invents a final reconciliation between Fielding and Aziz that creates a false sense of brotherhood between the British and the Indians. And he trivializes the entire colonial struggle with blimpish images of the raj and comedy-store impersonations of the natives. Guinness's Professor Godbole, in particular, is a scandalous representation. It's easy enough to ridicule a guru; the trick is to get behind the Peter Sellers routine, and Guinness manages that for just one instant.

In a week or so, *A Passage to India* will be nominated for an Academy Award, and by April, David Lean should be able to pick up his third Oscar as Best Director. He deserves a prize. For all its faults of literary license and cultural wrongheadedness, this is a striking movie-movie, perhaps the last one of the classic period that we will see. And besides, India is hot. *Gandhi* laid the groundwork. *The Jewel in the Crown* became the middlebrow PBS *Dynasty*. Then the various assassinations, riots and industrial disasters of the past year put the spotlight on the vast nation. And as they say on *Entertainment Tonight*, there's no such thing as bad publicity. □

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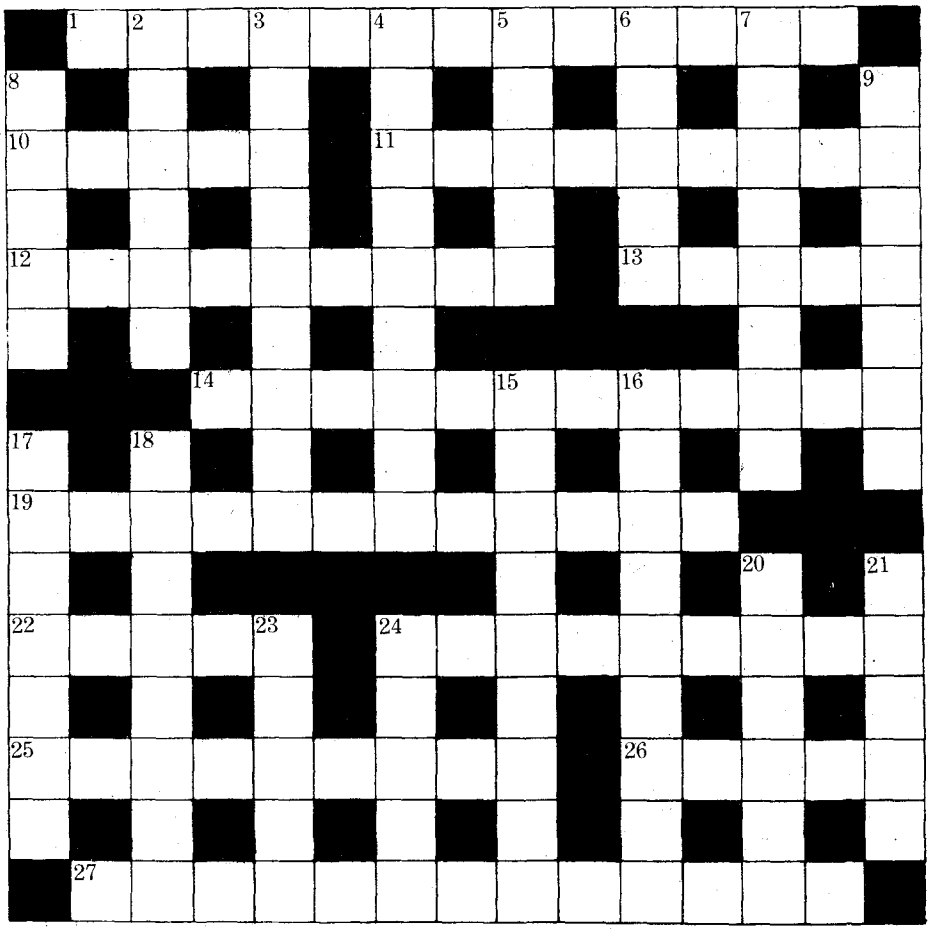
FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 A blonde found them out! (3,5,5)
10 One who prepares chicken for a fancy dish by mistake? (5)
11 Sounds like something has been added to the family of 1 across—perhaps your ancestors! (9)
12 We shouldn't treat others so, even if found alive by us. (9)
13 How elms and eucalyptus start out like a willow twig? (5)
14 The Salt Lake City and the Albany should be. (7,5)
19 The part of the sample that's easily irritated? (5-7)
22 The ludicrous gesture of an old clown. (5)
24 You might find the zebra gone, in time. (6,3)
25 An order for such as 1 across? (9)
26 A bare description of only part of Mailer's work? (5)
27 That which could be cited prospers as a sense of common interest. (6,2,5)

DOWN

2 What kids are sometimes told to do with their clothes might suggest one of the things the obsessed might have. (4,2)
3 Current connections of the railroad? (9)
4 Would a good example of such a verb be "mirror"? (9)
5 Rose like this, following Poor Richard's advice. (5)
6 A wing, an arch and a joint. (5)
7 A famous dissertation on it might be taken as a matter of course. (5,3)
8 What the lightship should have at right angles to the keel. (5)
9 Bad-mouth someone, for instance, intrinsically. (7)
15 Some stars might get shot by one. (9)
16 Obtained by using S for Z and O for special emphasis. (9)
17 It's supposed to be good coming up to it like the devil! (7)
18 Not in favor of what suggests the opposite of civil rights? (The clue bends out of shape, somewhat.) (8)
20 Reverse? The cat sometimes gets his! (4,2)
21 Perhaps 18, but also a problem for too fast risers. (5)
23 Was Young Winkie the town type? (5)
24 It might be swell to find a number in the ship. (5)

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G	E	H	E	N	N	A	■	C	O	N	E	■	E	■
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ANNOUNCING:
THE NATION FACT-FINDERS
TOUR TO ISRAEL*
MAY 18–JUNE 2

Find out for yourself what's going on in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Join The Nation Fact-Finders for a thought-provoking journey to the heart of the Middle East.

Leading the tour will be Arthur Samuelson, editor at Summit Books and a former editor of *New Outlook* magazine in Israel. Samuelson has written on Israel for *The Nation, Saturday Review, The Progressive* and *Inquiry* and most recently edited Abba Eban's *Heritage*.

HIGHLIGHTS

Last June, The Nation Fact-Finders visited Israel and returned with an enriched understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict and of Israeli and Palestinian society. Tour participants met with many Israelis and Palestinians including: Labor Member of Knesset Abba Eban, Likud MK Ehud Olmert, feminist and civil rights activist MK Shulamit Aloni, Director General of the Foreign Ministry David Kimche, Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem, deposed Mayor Karim Khalaf of Ramallah, author A.B. Yehoshua, Bir Zeit University Prof. Salim Tamari, and researcher Meron Benvenisti. Here's what some Fact-Finders veterans had to say afterward:

"It was a wonderful, stimulating and informative trip. Within Israel the selection of speakers was much more balanced than I expected."
Arthur Meth, San Diego, California

"On the whole this trip was nearly perfect. . . . I learned a great deal from it."
Jennie Baer, Deerfield Beach, Florida

"THIS WAS AN EXCELLENT TOUR!"
James and Colleen Kelly Johnston, Wichita, Kansas

- **Meetings with top government and opposition leaders.**
- **A firsthand look at conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including:**
  —Meetings with Jewish settlers.
  —Meetings with prominent Palestinians.
- **An examination of Israel's security needs, including:**
  —A point-counterpoint on the invasion of Lebanon.
  —A visit to the northern border and the Golan Heights.
- **Seminars with peace movement activists.**
- **Seminars and/or on-site exposure to other important aspects of Israeli society and politics, including:**
  —The economy: problems and solutions.
  —Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.
  —The Arab minority in Israel.
  —The Ashkenazi-Sefardi gap.
  —Religion: orthodoxy vs. pluralism.
- **A sampling of Israel's natural, historical and cultural wealth, including:**
  —A visit to Massada, a walking tour of the Old City of Jerusalem, a concert in Tel Aviv and a night at the guest house of Kibbutz Nof Ginossar, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.
  —Plenty of free time to explore on your own.
- **Optional trips to Egypt or the Sinai Desert.**

*PLUS JORDAN

We are also offering an optional three-day add-on visit to Amman, the capital of Jordan, for an additional $200 per person. The visit will include meetings with government officials and Jordanian and Palestinian intellectuals and some sightseeing.

Price: $2,500 per person (same as last year). This includes accommodations (double occupancy in first-class hotels in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv), all meals (except some lunches and dinners), airfare to and from New York City, comprehensive background reading material and all transportation, sightseeing and related costs while in Israel. We are offering a 5 percent individual discount to Nation Associates.

Space is limited, so plan ahead. Send a deposit of $200 per person to guarantee your place on the tour. All deposits are due April 1. (Make checks payable to RG Travel). Or send us the attached coupon for more information.

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